

Committee of the Whole - Midtown Oakville Meeting
December 12, 2023

Comments Received Regarding Item 5.1

Midtown Program – Planning Policy Tools



PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
& LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE

December 11, 2023

Clerks Department
Town of Oakville
1225 Trafalgar Road
Oakville, Ontario
L6H 0H3

Attention: Mayor and Members of Council

**RE: MIDTOWN OAKVILLE PHASE 2: LAND BLOCK OPTIONS
ROSE CORPORATION COMMENTS – 420-468 SOUTH SERVICE ROAD EAST
OUR FILE 1677"X"**

MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Limited ("MHBC") are the land use planning consultants for The Rose Corporation in relation to their interest in lands located at 420 to 468 South Service Road East (the "Subject Lands") in the Town of Oakville (generally referred to as the "GE Lands"). The majority of the GE Lands are vacant with the exception of an empty former office building that is situated near South Service Road. This site is approximately 11 ha (27 ac) in area.

As noted in several submissions to the Town over the past few years, the GE Lands are one of the largest, single-owned properties within Midtown Oakville. This represents a significant opportunity to redevelop the site to achieve the Urban Growth Centre growth targets while implementing the Midtown Oakville vision to become a complete community that is within walking distance of the Oakville GO Station.

PROPOSED MIDTOWN OAKVILLE LAND BLOCK OPTIONS

At the second Developers' Meeting held on November 29, 2023, the Town's consultants from Urban Strategies and Jacobs Consulting presented three concepts that include:

1. Trafalgar Central Focus;
2. West Office/Educational Focus; and,
3. Two Employment Centres.

As noted by the presenters, the common element underlying the above three land block options is residential uses. It was noted that the three options were presented as themed concepts that would create "character."

The main common elements that were identified within the three concepts and remain unchanged throughout each of them included the following: road network; underlying residential land use; long-term transit expansion on the east side of Trafalgar; population/job estimates; and, active transportation network.

In reviewing the options, our client's responses / concerns align with those identified by a number of participants / landowners as follows:

LAND USE

- We are of the opinion that the Midtown Oakville should remain as flexible as possible in terms of land use permissions and therefore all lands should have full mixed-use permissions and not be unduly restricted by policy. Requirements for specific land uses (i.e. retail, office, institutional) should be flexible to respond to market demands rather than prescribed through the policy regime.
- To this point, it should be recognized in the planning for Midtown that traditional office space development will be challenging given current market trends and increased emphasis on Work from Home (WFH) by many business organizations. There is significant evidence that demand for traditional office space has significantly declined with many existing office spaces being vacant and/or underutilized. The creation of empty office space should be avoided in Midtown.
- Should the Town see a future need for office, there are policies and programs that can be developed such as a Community Improvement Plan be implemented concurrently to support office development (similar to the City of Vaughan's program in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre). As well, the location of future office use would ideally be centralised along busier arterial roads, such as on Trafalgar Road.
- The various concepts pre-determine "Main Street" and retail frontages. While we do not oppose identification of these areas, sufficient flexibility should be provided in the policy documents to ensure that the design of the GE Lands is not unduly stifled by policy requirements / restrictions.
- The proposed concepts significantly undermine the economic viability of future development on the GE Lands as all options require conveyance of greater than 50% of the lands for roads, parks and other public areas rather than development.

DENSITY & BUILDING HEIGHTS

- Other Urban Growth Centres (and MTSAs), as a comparison, have been planned and are currently being developed for significant density (10 to 15+ FSI) and tall buildings (50 to 60+ storeys) – Midtown Oakville should be similarly planned. It is noted that the previous draft OPA contemplated density at 10 FSI with no height limits as previously presented and supported by Town staff (May 2023 OPA).

- We do not believe that maximum heights and densities should be set in Midtown Oakville. Rather, minimum heights and densities should be set as targets to be achieved, with specific heights and densities being established through the development review process (zoning) based on detailed submissions for each property. This allows specific properties within Midtown to be responsive to market conditions and specific development applications. This recommendation is in alignment with Provincial direction in other intensification areas in the GTA.
- Given their size, configuration, separation from existing low rise residential neighbourhoods, and single ownership status, the GE Lands are able to accommodate significant height and density. To this extent, the proposed FSI and heights shown for the GE Lands on the three concepts fail to optimize the use of these lands as called for by Provincial Policy. That being said, if Council is inclined to implement height and density restrictions in the proposed Official Plan Amendment, they should be increased substantially from what is shown in the concepts to reflect the important role of this Urban Growth Centre in the Town's urban Structure as the location for significant density within the Town.

SCHOOL SITES

- Information on school requirements has not been provided and thus pre-determining school locations is inappropriate at this time. We particularly have concerns with Concept C which places a number of community facilities (parks, school site, community uses, etc.) on the GE Lands (in addition to the significant road infrastructure being presented and provided for in these concepts on the GE Lands).

PARKS & OPEN SPACE

- Parkland is required to be provided for in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act. Depictions of parks on the GE Lands in the concept plans appears to exceed Planning Act requirements. Further clarification is required accordingly.
- Parkland should be dispersed throughout Midtown to provide a number of parkland options for future residents and employees.
- Parkland dedication policies in Midtown should provide significant implementation flexibility, including provision of strata parks, POPS and other mechanisms for open space provision.
- Utilization of the Hydro Corridor lands should be more fully explored as an option to provide parkland in Midtown (similar to what has occurred in other GTA municipalities).

CONCLUSIONS

At this time, our client is not supportive of any of the November 2023 concepts presented by the Town and Jacobs Consulting. Specifically, in our opinion the proposed concept plans do

not have regard for Section 2 of the Planning Act, are not consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and do not conform to the Growth Plan as they fail to optimize the development of Midtown as a whole and on the GE Lands specifically. It is therefore our opinion that the May 2023 proposed Official Plan Amendment should be the option that the Town proceeds as it represents the appropriate implementation of Provincial Policy and the development of Midtown Oakville as a complete community.

We would be pleased to meet further with the Town and Jacobs Consulting to discuss our concerns and comments.

Lastly, please ensure that we receive notice for any further meetings.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

MHBC



Dana Anderson, MA, FCIP, RPP
Partner



David A. McKay, MSc, MLAI, MCIP, RPP
Vice President & Partner

cc. *Clients*
Gabe Charles, Director of Planning
Jeff Qiao and Anna Fawcett, Jacobs



Marian E. Whiteman
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Town of Oakville
1225 Trafalgar Road
Oakville ON L6H 0H3

Dear Mayor Burton and Members of Council:

**RE: MIDTOWN OAKVILLE / URBAN GROWTH CENTRE: NEW CONCEPTS
GENERAL ELECTRIC LANDS – 420-468 SOUTH SERVICE ROAD EAST,
OAKVILLE**
OUR 20406A
FILE:

General Electric Canada ("GE") own the lands municipally located at 420-468 South Service Road East in the Town of Oakville (the "GE Lands"). The GE Lands are approximately 11 ha (27 ac) in area and are vacant, except for the vacant former office structure to the north of the site facing the South Service Road.

As GE has noted in previous correspondence to the Town of Oakville Council, the GE Lands represent one of the largest single-owned properties within Midtown Oakville and, consequently, the most significant redevelopment opportunity for Oakville to achieve the Provincial, Regional and Town intensification targets and to meet the Town's housing pledge.

Historic Midtown Oakville Policy Review: Context

In March 2021 the Town of Oakville released the draft Midtown Oakville Official Plan Amendment ("Midtown OPA"). GE submitted comments and provided a presentation to Council at the public meeting of March 21, 2021. In that presentation, GE noted its support for the increased heights and densities for the area as well as the added residential and mixed-use permissions. GE also expressed its concerns with the extensive road infrastructure requirements on its lands, the splitting of land use designations on the site, the constraints of the proposed height schedule (notwithstanding the additional height transfers), and the block design and cost-sharing policies.

Along with this public presentation, GE met with Town planning staff on numerous occasions as follows:

- May 3, 2021;
- September 17, 2021 (Design Charette);
- October 5, 2021 (follow-up Design Charette);
- November 1, 2021 (Transportation); and,
- March 2, 2022 (Proposed GE policy modifications).

On May 30, 2022, GE again met with Town staff after the release of another revised draft of the Midtown OPA. While there were several positive changes to the draft OPA, there were other major shifts in policies and changes to the schedules that continued to be of concern. The primary remaining areas of concern included:

- Removal of Developable Lands
- Road Requirements
 - Increased rights-of-way
- Parking Policies
- Parks & Public Realm
 - Volume of private land to be conveyed to Town
- Servicing and Costs

Following the May 2022 Midtown OPA and based on the direction of the Town for land use, height and density, GE discussed the master plan with several potential purchasers and secured a conditional offer for the lands.

Redesigning Midtown Oakville Options

To GE's surprise after the efforts described above, the Town recently retained a full slate of new consultants that had not participated in the original process and effectively restarted Midtown Oakville planning. This new process, named "Redesigning Midtown," proceeded without developer or landowner input, despite GE's prior active engagement with Town of Oakville staff and residents in meaningful discussions and design charettes.

The recent product of the "Redesigning Midtown" process set forth three impractical scenarios that deviate significantly and detrimentally from the May 2022 and early 2023 OPA. Among other issues, the plans substantially reduce development height and density, increase road networks beyond those previously proposed, and contemplate parkland dedications that far exceed the maximum caps set out in the Planning Act. The considerable infrastructure costs contemplated by these plans to deliver growth are not grounded in achievable development goals. The shift to land use alternatives that reintroduce dedicated office towers have caused debt and equity investors to identify the area as "high risk" and to greatly extend their time horizons or entirely reconsider investment in Midtown Oakville. Finally, there are concerns that the policy framework, still to come, will further restrict and constrain what little opportunities remain.

For GE's Lands, the proposal "goes backwards" from an acceptable Midtown Oakville vision for change to one that limits opportunities for the required level of intensification within Midtown Oakville, a significant Urban Growth Centre in the Province of Ontario. Achieving the required growth in Midtown will require essential and committed input from those who will make it happen. While we appreciate the community's interest in Midtown development, this development must be driven by the broader public interest in practically delivering housing and jobs. If the Town approves any of the three proposed options, GE Lands (which represents significant land holdings in Midtown Oakville) likely would not be developed anytime soon.

We understand that Rose Corporation has provided a separate letter outlining in detail the concerns in the alternative land use options. We share the same concerns and wholly support the notion that flexibility needs to be included in the policies, both in terms of land use permissions and height and density permissions, to allow for transit supportive mixed-use development within Midtown Oakville. The suggested flexibility will ensure that the GE lands and necessary development infrastructure can be optimized, consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and in conformity with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe including the minimum population and employment targets set out in the Growth Plan.

Conclusion

GE appreciates the work completed by Town staff that evolved into the May 2022 draft OPA, with a few areas of concern. The former OPA provided the opportunity to redevelop the GE Lands with a viable mixed-use development that would achieve many of the Town's objectives for the area. The current process and recently presented options have removed that opportunity, creating significant potential that the GE lands will remain vacant for many years. We strongly encourage Town staff to revert back to the last staff draft OPA and work with GE and our consultant team to address the limited areas of concern that we raised during the original process. We would be pleased to convene with Town staff and Rose Corporation to discuss how to get the Midtown Oakville OPA back on track and into a final policy document that will ensure Midtown Oakville is developed in the near future as a vibrant mixed-use community where many people can work, live and play.

If you have any questions about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me as set forth above.

Kindest Regards,



Marian E. Whiteman
Executive Counsel

June 4, 2022

Mayor Burton and Members of Council
Town of Oakville
1225 Trafalgar Road
Oakville, ON
L6H 0H3

Attn: Town Clerk

Dear Mayor Burton and Members of Council:

**RE: TOWN OF OAKVILLE INITIATED OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT – MIDTOWN
OAKVILLE URBAN GROWTH CENTRE (File No. 42.15.59)
GENERAL ELECTRIC LANDS (420-468 SOUTH SERVICE ROAD EAST, OAKVILLE)
OUR FILE: 20406A**

MacNaughton Hermesen Britton Clarkson Planning Limited (“MHBC”) is currently retained by General Electric Canada (“GE”) in relation to the lands municipally located at 420 to 468 South Service Road East in the Town of Oakville (hereinafter the “GE Lands”). The GE Lands are 11.08 ha in area and currently vacant with the exception of the remnant building façade from the former office building on the site.

The GE lands represent one of the largest singly owned properties within Midtown Oakville and as such one of the most significant opportunities for redevelopment to achieve the requirements of Provincial, Regional and Town policies for intensification and growth in the Town’s most important Strategic Growth Area.

Background and Development of a Conceptual Master Plan for the GE Lands

Since the release of the draft Midtown Official Plan Amendment (“Midtown OPA”) in early March 2021, GE has met with and worked with Town staff on several occasions, presented its concept plans for the GE Lands in a design workshop format, and provided a number of comments on the draft policies and schedules.

On March 21, 2021, GE submitted comments on the initial draft Midtown OPA and provided a presentation at the public meeting. GE highlighted its initial responses including its support for

the increased heights and densities for the area as well as the added residential and mixed use permissions. GE noted its concerns with the extensive road infrastructure requirements on its lands, the splitting of land use designations on the site, the constraints of the proposed height schedule notwithstanding the additional height transfers, and concerns with the block design and cost sharing policies.

In the previous draft Midtown OPA, the public realm and parkland policies were flexible and would allow parkland objectives to be planned and achieved through the block plans. This was extremely important to GE. Given the size of its lands and the already heavy overlay of roads, an ability to design the site with flexibility on delivering public realm elements including active transportation routes, all accessible to the public, would allow optimization of the development while delivering the public realm through publicly accessible park space, open space areas, pedestrian connections and even private roads on its lands.

Following the public meeting in March 2021 and over the past year, GE has committed substantial resources and time to develop a conceptual master plan for the GE Lands. GE retained BDP Quadrangle Architects and WSP as part of its project team and worked with Town staff to develop the concept for the master plan in order to address the Town's needs and objectives. Following meetings with Town planning and transportation staff on March 1, 2021, May 3, 2021, September 17, 2021 (Design Charrette), October 5, 2021 (follow up Design Charrette), November 1, 2021 (Transportation), and March 2, 2022 (proposed GE policy modifications) a letter was prepared and sent to staff on March 13, 2022 which set out the final draft recommended modifications to the March 2021 version of the draft Midtown OPA that would provide for the implementation of the GE Lands conceptual master plan.

May 12, 2022 Draft Midtown OPA Comments

GE has had an opportunity to review the revised Midtown OPA, the Town staff report dated May 24, 2022, and also meet with Town staff on May 30, 2022 to further understand the major changes in policies and the rationale for these changes. The following is a summary of GE's comments on the revised Midtown OPA. GE hopes to continue to work with the Town to address these issues.

Overall Concerns

While GE appreciates the work completed by staff, the Company is extremely disappointed in the proposed changes. After GE retained experts and worked for over a year with staff to develop a conceptual master plan and implementing policy framework that would meet the Region's and Town's planning goals, the shift in policies came without any disclosure to or knowledge of GE. GE feels its commitment and work has not been reflected to allow the GE Lands to be developed in the way envisioned through the master plan. The shift in the plan creates a new policy framework that pushes development into four quadrants on the GE Lands, dominated by height and built form, to create extremely tall towers that will achieve the new FSI and parking requirements (even if substantially reduced) as set out in the Town's proposed plan for the GE Lands. The vision to provide for mid-rise and tall buildings cannot be achieved for the reasons stated below which further affects the ability to provide for a broader housing unit mix within the development.

The added road infrastructure and increased rights-of-way and required publicly conveyed park areas were not identified as proposed changes during any of the meetings with staff. There does not appear to be anything in the staff report that provides an assessment or evidence to support these changes and additions, which disproportionately burden the GE lands.

Land Uses

The revisions to the land use schedule to apply the Urban Core designation to all of the GE Lands is appreciated and will allow for a full range of uses as developed for the conceptual master plan. The disconnect however with the new policies is the relationship between those uses and the resulting built form based on the massive widths of publicly conveyed land created through the rights-of-way and public parks. In some cases, the separation of development blocks is almost 60 metres, which does not reflect a fine-grained street network in an urban context.

Height and Density Changes

While GE supports the removal of the height limits and use of FSI to direct density, it is not feasible or achievable to optimize density and meet the growth objectives for Midtown Oakville and specifically the GE Lands. As noted, the conceptual master plan provided for the ability to achieve the many development and design objectives set out by the Town through the integration of public and private elements. The master plan ensured connectivity and integration, allowing the person on the ground to experience a public realm without a distinction between publically owned versus private lands, enabling a streetscape and park space that complemented the scale of development. Again the new plan pushes the development into small development blocks, resulting in extremely tall towers in each with multiple levels of below and above ground parking to achieve even the minimum density envisioned for these lands, with little to no integrated public realms, and mostly Town owned and separated parks.

Removal of Developable Lands

The revised policies and schedules introduce substantially increased road rights-of-way over the GE Lands as well as new required public parks to be conveyed. As a result of the revised schedules, the GE Lands are now reduced from 11.08 ha of land to 6.7 ha (i.e., approximately 40 percent of the site is being required for public roads and parks). No other lands within Midtown Oakville have the same level of public conveyance requirements. This represents a disproportionate removal of lands from the site compared to other areas and has the most impact given the size of the GE Lands as the largest redevelopment block to achieve the Town's objectives and meet the Provincial requirements to optimize development in growth areas.

Road Requirements

GE had provided a number of comments related to the proposed road network and its constraints and barriers to development. GE has also met with transportation staff to present the conceptual master plan and illustrate how the road network can be reduced and revised while still maintaining adequate movement, access and connectivity for both transit and active transportation. One example stressed during discussions and in our submissions is the inability to provide for connections for open spaces and underground parking as a result of the flyover road

constraint, which is now proposed to increase to 36 metres through the whole site. This creates a significant barrier to redevelopment.

It is still not clear why or how this flyover will be needed or how it is envisioned to serve Midtown with its intended design. Furthermore, it is now proposed to extend across the rail line to connect to Cornwall Road, which was never raised in any discussions with the Town. This new road segment will change its dynamic from a locally serving road facility to more of a 'through road', which is likely to attract more traffic that is not destined to Midtown but rather using it as a 'cut through' opportunity. This change does not represent good transportation planning from the perspective of achieving the objectives for a transit oriented community and urban growth centre.

Instead of reducing roads as a key objective for a key transit oriented community and urban growth centre, the revised Midtown Oakville OPA has increased the number of roads and the right-of-ways. This is completely in conflict with Provincial and Regional policies. There is no transportation analysis or report to support this shift. Evidence based planning has proven that when road rights of way are reduced, travel patterns evolve and shift behaviours and travel modes. Midtown Oakville is served by Oakville GO and is to become a "self-sufficient urban community". Staff's own report states that the policies and schedules are intended to continue to establish Midtown as both a transit oriented community and complete community which facilitates less reliance on vehicles and address climate change and the biggest contributors of greenhouse gas emissions which includes energy for transportation. However, reducing roads for vehicles is not what has been provided. In fact the opposite has been provided by introducing additional roads and increased rights-of-way. The Town has not provided updated cross sections of the rights-of-way but based on the current cross sections there appears to be wasted width for features for the north south flyover (such as a two-way left-turn lane down the centre of the road – which should not be included for this road through Midtown), bike lanes in both directions, and a trail on one side and a sidewalk on the other. There seem to be redundancies that should be addressed to streamline this road (and others) to reflect a well-planned road that minimizes the rights-of-way and is reflective of the transit function the Town has stated the road is intended to serve.

The Provincial Policy Statement 2020 provides policies in Section 1.6.7 and 1.6.8 to direct municipalities to address its land use and transportation policies in a way that reduces car use and supports transit and active transportation. Section 1.6.7.4 states that land use patterns, densities and mix of uses should be promoted in ways that "minimize length and number of vehicle trips and support current and future use of transit and active transportation". Section 1.6.8.5 states that the co-location of linear infrastructure should be promoted, where appropriate". As noted above, it is unclear how infrastructure is being efficiently provided and how reduced vehicle use is being proposed with the addition of added streets for road use.

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2020 is very clear in its policies for compact built form which is to be developed in Priority MTSAs and Urban Growth Centres. Compact built form is defined in the Growth Plan to reflect a land use pattern that includes a street network that efficiently uses land and provides for walkable neighbourhoods characterized by roads laid out in

a well connected network and minimizing new infrastructure. The roads are to be well connected and focused on a pedestrian friendly environment that encourages active transportation. Increased modal share for active transportation and transit is to be the focus of the design of the street network. The current added roads and added rights-of-way appear to move away from this policy direction with an emphasis on vehicle movement and use.

The Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 48 specifically requires municipalities to adopt alternative design standards for roads through Strategic Growth Areas. It is not clear how this has been achieved as the Town has stated it has increased the rights-of-way to match its current Town-wide rights-of-way which reflect more typical suburban standards. This shift is counter to Provincial and Regional objectives for an MTSA and Priority Transit Corridor.

There is also no discussion or ability to provide for private roads or active transportation routes that serve the exact same functions as public roads in the report. The staff report references Vaughan Metropolitan Centre as an example of a Major Transit Station Area similar to Midtown Oakville that is now achieving its growth objectives through development. What is not referenced is the flexibility in Vaughan's plan to allow for stratification where public lands are required for underground parking or connections, and the direction to allow for private streets to serve network functions.

Parking

Reductions to parking should be a key objective for Midtown as directed by ROPA 48 which states that parking standards and policies in Strategic Growth Areas should promote active transportation and public transit and not increased vehicle use. The goal of the transportation infrastructure appears to be focused on vehicle traffic and car movement, which would increase parking demands, when it should be focusing more on promoting the use of public transit.

Parks and Public Realm

The new park policies both identify and prescribe the location and size of required parks. This is ahead of what staff has identified will be a Town-wide park strategy and updated parkland dedication by-law that will apply to Midtown Oakville to be presented on June 14, 2022.

GE worked with staff to identify and provide for public park space in its master plan and agree to the importance of providing good quality public open space in an intensification area with high density development. Achieving public open space in higher order growth areas presents challenges not experienced in other areas and has to take a different approach in planning than traditional public land conveyance. The policies do not reflect the need to provide for alternative approaches which should include Town acquisition of additional lands to serve the needs of the entire area. Other municipalities like the City of Vaughan have employed a lower parkland standard in higher order growth areas like the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.

The revised Midtown OPA policies require the conveyance from the GE Lands of a promenade that is 20 m wide along Davis Road (that was previously the Cross Avenue extension), two urban squares and two connector corridors with a minimum width of 20 metres. In addition the policies require a further 5% as privately owned publicly accessible open space ("POPS"). The total land

required for open space is approximately 20% of the GE Lands. Similar to the road requirements, this is disproportional on the GE Lands. It does not reflect a “win-win” scenario as described in the staff report and is not an incentive for the redevelopment. Further, a fixed percentage requirement for POPS also severely limits development opportunities on this site. Any POPS policies need to be flexible so as not to unduly constrain a site’s developability and ability to develop much needed housing and employment uses within this area.

The shift in policy actually moves away from the Town’s objective of achieving public space and public realm in a timely and efficient manner. Public conveyance of the large areas will require the Town to maintain and service these areas. Given the size of GE Lands and the phasing of development, it is also not clear how the public conveyance will provide for the parks in a timely manner unless there is an assumption that the developers are also designing and delivering the spaces, in which case the lands would be best delivered through a POPS form of parks. Most growth centres, including the VMC, utilize POPS to optimize the delivery and development of parks and the public realm. It is unclear why the policy shift has been made away from this in the current Midtown Oakville OPA.

If as staff state “the provision of adequate and appropriately designed parks and open space within Midtown is critical to its success”, why is POPS not the primary means to achieve the objective?

Servicing and Costs

The staff report notes that the Town will use a combination of tools to deal with the coordination of the infrastructure costs of redevelopment. Understanding with certainty, the process and costs for development in order to achieve financially viable and sustainable development, is key to the success of Midtown.

The staff report notes that Halton Region recently undertook an update of its Servicing Plan for Midtown which it states could take 18 months to complete. The report states that the Region’s Servicing Master Plan update will require the approved Midtown OPA to estimate servicing capacity. It goes on to state the Midtown Oakville Area Servicing Plan will then need to be updated. Following all of that, the Region will then update its Development Charges By-law to fund the servicing required.

Midtown Oakville is not a new development area. The Region has known of the requirement to service Midtown Oakville for the minimum 200 jobs and persons per hectare since 2006 when the Places to Grow Act and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was brought into effect. The servicing and infrastructure needs of Midtown Oakville should be a priority and needs to advanced soon so that the vision set out in the proposed Midtown Oakville plan can be realized.

While GE is disappointed with the shift in the policy framework especially as it relates to roads and parks, it is still committed to working with the Town to achieve what can be an incredible redevelopment of its lands that achieves the requirements for transit oriented growth and development and complete communities. GE is committed to continue to refine its conceptual master plan which aligns with the Provincial, Regional and Town objectives for new housing,

employment, access and connectivity, urban design, architectural quality, attractive streetscapes, accessible parks and open space as well as sustainable and energy efficient servicing and design to address climate change.

Thank you for the receipt and consideration of our comments at this time.

Sincerely,

MHBC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dana Anderson', written over the 'MHBC' text.

Dana Anderson, FCIP, RPP
Partner

Cc. Karen Simons, General Electric Canada

From: Bill McCreery [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 12:05 PM
To: Neil Garbe <neil.garbe@oakville.ca>; Town Clerks <TownClerk@oakville.ca>; Cathy Duddeck <cathy.duddeck@oakville.ca>
Cc: Janet Haslett-Theall <janet.haslett-theall@oakville.ca>; David Gittings <david.gittings@oakville.ca>; Jane Clohecy <jane.clohecy@oakville.ca>; 'elizabeth.chalmers' [REDACTED]
'Qiao, Jeff' <Jeff.Qiao@jacobs.com>; Rob Burton <Mayor@oakville.ca>; Phoebe Fu <phoebe.fu@oakville.ca>
Subject: RE: Midtown Oakville: Consultants' Scope of Work & Deliverables

Good morning Mr. Garbe,

I appreciate your response.

Since I am not an urban planner with the depth of their skilled knowledge-based perspective, I tend to basing observations and comments utilizing first principles having spent a career leading and managing knowledgeable multi-disciplinary subject matter professional experts in planning, design and construction.

It appears that current urban planning practices and government protocols/processes establish block planning benchmarks before a key driver in the decision-making process such as transportation studies, existing traffic data and future **forecasting** are commenced and completed. That does not preclude transformational leaders from exploring opportunities and constraints investigating transportation and traffic earlier in the planning process to achieve optimal outcomes before locking in baseline assumptions.

Historically, before the advent of ICE vehicles and a few battery-operated vehicles in the late 1800's/early 1900's and latterly many ZEV vehicles post-2000, most people relied on walking, biking and horse drawn carriages. In its time, it served society well. Robust road networks developed to meet the needs of commerce and residents. Many streets in Europe were narrow driven by many factors such as required widths for early types of travel (e.g. small vehicles) and small product movement (Unlike bulk loads of today hauled by Amazon, FedEx and others). There was a movement to open up urban spaces, in part driven by pandemics of the day. In the mid 1900's freeways in the USA and Canada (i.e. Gardiner Expressway) were much in vogue and are still a force in today's economy. If you build it, they will come. Increasingly this has generated even more roads, and larger/wider existing roads. And much more congestion.

Fundamentally, the livable open urban spaces created by adjacent building types and structures should be a key determinant in Town Council decision-making. People's quality of life at ground level should take precedence over vehicular traffic.

Midtown Oakville - Cross Avenue: Proposed Six (6) Lane Future

Since this will be the location of a significant number of people focused activity generated by the GO Station, and vehicular traffic, it is a good candidate for day-to-day people focused events such as characterized by retail (e.g.: Union Station recognizes this reality with its recently added underground retail). Unlike the proposed **Argus & Davis** retail focus, this activity will happen naturally and organically. People want to reduce travel time. By locating necessities such as food on the way people can maximize their time at home with family and friends freeing up time for core living needs plus externally focused social interactions on lanes, paths and parks. Secondary retail, if there is a market driver, may be located close to housing (e.g. corner store).

For example, this September, we saw some wide roads with a similar # of lanes in urban Spain. Spain's urban differentiated signalized roads worked with wide sidewalks, public transit, dedicated bike lanes, sometimes scooter/motorbike lanes. Pedestrian crossings were pulled back from the corners to increase safety. Street parking is essential. Right turns on red may have been prohibited.

If six lanes are required to meet current and future vehicle requirements, please determine what works well for people in urban settings such as the effective precedent setting downtown Oakville, including street parking and parking garages to free up land for more productive use. And what doesn't work well such as Dundas Street and Trafalgar. If people embrace the 15 minute concept where ease of walkability, and 'bike-ability' is a factor, the need for a 6 lane road can be reduced. In Paris, urban planners are contemplating adding more people friendly settings on the Champs-Elysee and reducing the number of lanes dedicated to vehicles. Given the length of time it takes to get from A to B, such as the trip into Toronto, many people may not go as far. Biking and walking may become more important then, as it is a viable alternative, if planning is done well. See the Netherlands. Michael Sutherland, Hatch (formerly with Metrolinx) espouses this approach. Please give weight to landscape architects in consultations with transportation engineers, town staff and Town Council to achieve a livable balance. It is possible.

Retail: Argus and Davis

Intuitively, this will most probably be a backwater since the generator of all different types of traffic including people is the GO Station and north of the GO Station. A comparator is the retail south of Walmart which seems devoid of meaningful street activity even with street parking. And Dundas at Trafalgar is not a livable precedent.

Midtown Scope of Work including Addenda & Deliverables

Please add the abovementioned to the Midtown Oakville website so the public may view it. I have no issue with seeking an FOI request, but then only I see the critical information and it delays my being able to view the information.

When looking for transportation information before your response, I noted that there was a recent TAC and developer meeting at Town Hall. I could not locate minutes or a video. Are you posting this type of information?

Note

Given the magnitude of the Midtown Oakville information, I have probably missed key background information. There is a lot to unpack. Please correct any errors and omissions to enable me to make fair and reasonable comments.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Bill McCreery

From: Neil Garbe <neil.garbe@oakville.ca>

Sent: Monday, December 11, 2023 10:38 AM

To: 'Bill McCreery' [REDACTED]

Cc: Janet Haslett-Theall <janet.haslett-theall@oakville.ca>; David Gittings <david.gittings@oakville.ca>;

Jane Clohecy <jane.clohecy@oakville.ca>; 'elizabeth.chalmers' [REDACTED]

Cathy Duddeck <cathy.duddeck@oakville.ca>; 'Qiao, Jeff' <Jeff.Qiao@jacobs.com>; Rob Burton

<Mayor@oakville.ca>; Phoebe Fu <phoebe.fu@oakville.ca>; Neil Garbe <neil.garbe@oakville.ca>

Subject: RE: Midtown Oakville: Consultants' Scope of Work & Deliverables

Hello Mr. McCreery,

Thank you for your inquiry and continuous interest in the Midtown Oakville Project.

The Midtown Transportation Plan will address transportation and mobility within the Midtown area for all users. Specific public events to engage around this topic will be held in the first half of 2024, with completion mid-year, 2024. [A map is available on the Midtown page under basic facts](#). The Midtown Transportation Plan is specific to the Midtown area, but further work is being done as part of the Town-wide Transportation Master Plan and Region-wide Integrated Master Plan which look at infrastructure beyond the boundaries of the Midtown specific study.

The current phase of work, which is focused on the Official Plan Amendment is looking at land-use policies. The Midtown Transportation Plan will then build off of those policies, aligning with the 2051 Joint Best Planning Estimates (JBPEs) to recommend infrastructure and other measures to enhance mobility options in the future. All three of the land use concepts currently being shared have similar overall densities and will result in similar net traffic patterns in the future, again which will be looked at as part of the Midtown Transportation Plan. The intent is not to select one option, but to combine elements of the land use concepts that council, stakeholders, and members of the public desire the most within Midtown to build a complete community.

As part of the Official Plan Amendment, we are outlining the theory/function of key roadways within the study area which will help support the growth anticipated and align with the land-uses. It will also provide a right-of-way for roadways within Midtown to support future roadway configurations and provide clarity to land-owners on how development blocks will be arranged. In Phase 1 of the program, we reviewed existing context of the Midtown area and summarized key goals and opportunities, this was shared in the first PIC as well as [COW #3 meeting](#). We are currently starting Phase 3 of our work, which is creating a preferred land-use concept, which we will share in January 2024 along with a conceptual 3D demonstration and policy directions.

High level program information is available on the [Oakville.ca/Midtown](https://oakville.ca/Midtown) page, along with recent updates and current engagement activities/opportunities. More specific details about the overall program and inclusion of the Official Plan Amendment update was shared at the August 24th, [Committee of the Whole #2 \(COW\) meeting](#). The RFSQ-13-2022 Document you noted below is no longer available to the public for download. Should you wish to access this information, you may opt to go through the FOI process [here](#).

Regards,

Neil

From: Bill McCreery [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, December 9, 2023 11:12 AM
To: Neil Garbe <neil.garbe@oakville.ca>
Cc: Janet Haslett-Theall <janet.haslett-theall@oakville.ca>; David Gittings <david.gittings@oakville.ca>; Jane Clohecy <jane.clohecy@oakville.ca>; 'elizabeth.chalmers' [REDACTED]
Cathy Duddeck <cathy.duddeck@oakville.ca>; 'Qiao, Jeff' <Jeff.Qiao@jacobs.com>; Rob Burton <Mayor@oakville.ca>
Subject: RE: Midtown Oakville: Consultants' Scope of Work & Deliverables

Hi Mr. Garbe,

Further to my original November 30th email and follow-up December 6th , 2023 below:

Given that there is a Committee Meeting on December 12 regarding Midtown Oakville, I had hoped to provide additional timely written input including responding to the concept survey that Ward 3 councilors issued December 2nd ,2023.

However, “...investigate”... does not demonstrate action. Your lack of response in a timely fashion is not acceptable if town staff are sincerely seeking public consultation input.

If you now actually do respond with meaningful information at the 11th hour, I may not have sufficient time to review and reflect upon overall issues, let alone key issues.

No wonder the public including the development sector may be frustrated on a perceived or real lack of progress in the government planning process leading to real product (i.e. infrastructure; buildings such as housing) being implemented.

Best regards,

Bill McCreery

Oakville

From: Neil Garbe <neil.garbe@oakville.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 9:33 AM
To: 'Bill McCreery' [REDACTED]
Cc: Janet Haslett-Theall <janet.haslett-theall@oakville.ca>; David Gittings <david.gittings@oakville.ca>;

Jane Clohecy <jane.clohecy@oakville.ca>; 'elizabeth.chalmers' [REDACTED]
Cathy Duddeck <cathy.duddeck@oakville.ca>; 'Qiao, Jeff' <Jeff.Qiao@jacobs.com>
Subject: RE: Midtown Oakville: Consultants' Scope of Work & Deliverables

My apologies for not responding. I will ask the team to investigate.

Neil Garbe, B.A., M.PL., RPP, PLE
Commissioner - Community Development
Community Development Commission
Town of Oakville | 905-845-6601, ext.2271 | www.oakville.ca

Vision: A vibrant and livable community for all
Please consider the environment before printing this email.
<http://www.oakville.ca/privacy.html>

From: Bill McCreery [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 9:22 AM
To: Neil Garbe <neil.garbe@oakville.ca>
Cc: Janet Haslett-Theall <janet.haslett-theall@oakville.ca>; David Gittings <david.gittings@oakville.ca>;
Jane Clohecy <jane.clohecy@oakville.ca>; 'elizabeth.chalmers' [REDACTED]
Cathy Duddeck <cathy.duddeck@oakville.ca>
Subject: RE: Midtown Oakville: Consultants' Scope of Work & Deliverables

Hello Mr. Garbe,

Since you have not responded to date to my request below, I will clarify why I requested the scope of work and deliverables:

I could not locate TAC reports which I hoped would shed some light on vehicle traffic loading on various primary, secondary and tertiary roads. (Note: QEW loading is also an issue). Since traffic capacity will have a material impact on the three master planning options, it is fundamental to the success of the optimal proposal selected by Town Council.

Please provide the weblink to the traffic data. Or please provide the requested information. If it does not exist yet, when will it be forthcoming?

As well, please provide the weblink to the consultants' scope of work and deliverables as it may be useful to understand the study in a broader context.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Bill McCreery

From: Bill McCreery [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 3:26 PM
To: 'Neil Garbe' <neil.garbe@oakville.ca>
Cc: 'Janet Haslett-Theall' <janet.haslett-theall@oakville.ca>; 'David Gittings' <david.gittings@oakville.ca>; 'Jane Clohecy' <jane.clohecy@oakville.ca>; 'elizabeth.chalmers' [REDACTED]
Subject: Midtown Oakville: Consultants' Scope of Work & Deliverables

Good afternoon Mr. Garbe,

I am attempting to locate the consultants' scope of work and deliverables but to date have only succeeded in identifying the following RFSQ which may be out of date. Furthermore, there appears to be a paywall.

*"RFSQ-13-2022 Bid Document
Monday August 29, 2022 02:52 PM"*

Please forward a digital copy of the current scope of work including addenda and deliverables. If it is already publicly available, please direct me to the correct link.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,

Bill McCreery