

Committee of the Whole - Midtown Oakville Meeting  
January 30, 2024

**Comments Received Regarding Item 5.1**

Midtown Program – Proposed Land Use Concept

Good morning Cathy,

I have looked at the "**Growth Planning & Management: Town of Oakville & Midtown Oakville, Midtown Committee of the Whole**" document dated January 30, 2024.

[planning-midtown-presentation-24jan30.pdf \(oakville.ca\)](#) This link is kindly provided by Ward 3 Councillors in their most recent "**Letter from your Ward 3 Councillors**" dated January 29, 2024.

Following are my **comments and questions** for consideration at tonight's public meeting:

### 1. Planning Principles

a. "**The "Growth Planning & Management ..."**" document dated January 30, 2024 provides a broad overview of baseline assumptions.

i. **Question:** What *methodology* was utilized to test these assumptions? Did staff and/or consultants undertake a *risk reward assessment* to determine the probability – Risk & Value Matrix (low, medium, high range) of the veracity and validity of the assumptions that they made? Historically, consultants may have utilized a Monte Carlo simulation which may study 10,000 computer generated simulations. "The Monte Carlo simulation is a mathematical technique that predicts possible outcomes of an uncertain event. Computer programs use this method to analyze past data and predict a range of future outcomes based on a choice of action."

*"If the ladder is not leaning against the right wall, every step we take just gets us to the wrong place faster." Steven Covey*

### 2. Urban Planning Review and Implementation.

a. Change is inevitable and ongoing.

i. **Question:** Will urban planning assumptions be reviewed **every 5 years** to meet future economic and community needs based on changes to society including 2024 baseline planning assumptions? Typically, the certainty of forecast modelling assumptions such as those in "**The Growth Planning & Management...**" diminishes over time due to a range of unforeseen issues arising regarding demographics, technology, transportation, other infrastructure, employment, service delivery et al..

b. For example, **WFH (Working From Home)** appears to have made substantial inroads into the North American marketplace commencing with the Covid pandemic with material impacts on much lower office occupancy rates (consequent office building financial devaluations); additional space requirements for home office space; and the economic viability and safety of downtowns in such urban centres as Toronto, San Francisco, etc..

c. **Technical Study – Wind:** Typically, especially with regard to high-rise structures, essential Wind Studies are done by such reputable firms as RWDI, Guelph, Ontario or other equally qualified companies.

i. **Objectives:**

1. To ensure that built form environments at the ground level are walkable and safe from people being blown over.
2. Identify areas at ground level where people may benefit from the addition of temporary and/or fixed **shading structures** for mitigating excessive humid heat during warmer months; and adding areas to enhance natural breezes to cool people off. With **Climate Change** underway, this issue is and will become much more significant in southern Ontario.
3. It also informs developers about how higher building elevations balconies may be added before excessive winds become a significant safety factor affecting people.

ii. **Question:** Have staff and/or consultants undertaken a Wind Study to date.

3. **Mixed-Use**

- a. The **bubble diagram** drawing shown under “**The Proposed Concept: the Underlying Theory of the OPA**” identifies a number of mixed-use foci and precincts.

i. **Questions:**

1. What is the difference?
2. Will all foci and precincts be totally mixed use? Please clarify.
3. **Office Employment Precinct** (east end): If this is adjacent to the Train shunting yard, have staff and/or consultants considered mitigating noise by adding sound attenuation glazing on mixed use occupancies such as housing? **Note:** Unless and until **WFH** diminishes, the office building marketplace is and will continue to be weak according to CBRE and others.

- a. **Question:** Have staff and/or consultants taken this into account in the report titled “**The “Growth Planning & Management ...”**”?

ii. **Retail:**

1. The type and level of retail will impact where it should be located (e.g. Argus/Davis and/or Cross, etc.). It may change “**The Proposed Concept: the Underlying Theory of the OPA**” block plan including assumptions. The current bubble diagram makes retail location assumptions. Staff and/or consultants may have selected preferred retail locations from a planning perspective. However, this may not work financially for retailers nor recognize real foot traffic depending on a host of factors.

a. **Questions:**

- i. What methodology did staff and/or consultants utilize to establish retail locations?

- ii. Have staff and/or consultants engaged retail consultants:

1. To assess different types of retail experiences and the different levels of retail (e.g. food stores; pharmacies; hardware store; food services; mid to high level stores, etc.)?

2. Depending on retail study outcomes, what are the best or optimal location(s) for retail to integrate with livability aspirations?

#### 4. Population

- a. JRCA and others have questioned the population numbers.
  - i. ..."Midtown Oakville: 79,000 - 80,000 inhabitants per square km"....
  - ii. ..."Manhattan: 28,154 residents per square km"..
- b. **Question:** What is staffs' response to the very real concerns about the high probability of impacts on the economic viability due to highly probable future transportation gridlock and livability in Midtown Oakville, nearby, downtown and throughout Oakville?
- c. **Question:** What is the **Mayor's response**, especially given that consultants contractually report to staff and key staff such as the CAO report to the Mayor under the **Strong Mayors and Duties** provincial provisions? What is the Mayor's position on the highly probable overpopulation?

JCRA. Jan. 25, 2024

#### 5. Infrastructure

- a. **Question:**
  - i. What is the proposed clean grid and physical plant power approach?
  - ii. Will Oakville provide large-scale battery storage to support solar and wind power?
- b. I may have missed this information but I have not located this critical information.

#### 6. Transportation

- a. **Cornwall Road @ Trafalgar:** This is the current major transportation route for all traffic with the exclusion of the GO Train service.
  - i. **"3. Connections to Regional Network":** Based on this road network diagram, it appears that the proposed Cross Avenue route is contemplated to become the more primary arterial artery than Cornwall/Trafalgar.
    1. **Question:**
      - a. How will this be accomplished to change people's behavior/use?
        - i. The proposed road connectors from/to Midtown Oakville east, west, north and south do not flow, if anything the flow is minimal. Please demonstrate how traffic gridlock will be mitigated including at peak loading times. The connectivity (transportation & people [pedestrians & bicycles] is not seamless, if anything it is disjointed and abrupt. Analogy: water flows well in straight pipes, less so when changes in direction like right angles are abrupt.
- b. **Cross Avenue** is to be a major traffic artery. Given it's importance to effective traffic flow, the T-Intersection at Cross Avenue and Cornwall Road as currently envisioned will most probably require a major modification to the number of lanes at the intersection and the addition to or the replacement of the bridge over Sixteen Mile Creek.

- i. **Question:** What and/or when will transportation issues such as this be resolved and inputted into the urban plan?
- c. **Cornwall Road east & west Question:** Will Cornwall Road be widened to mitigate increased traffic requirements?
- d. **Argus/Davis @ Trafalgar:** The grade separation connection needs to be strengthened.
  - i. **Question:** Have staff and/or consultants considered widening this road connection and possibly adding lightwells and retail to enhance continuity of the walking experience? If people don't feel safe, the connection may not work.
- e. **Grade Separation over HWY #403:**
  - i. **Question:** Have staff and/or consultants considered increasing the width of the overhead pedestrian connection from the existing Oakville Place to Midtown Oakville?
- f. **BRT (Bus Rapid Transit):**
  - i. **Question:** Will the BRT (elevated or at grade) require the widening of Trafalgar Road?
- g. **GO Transit:**
  - i. **Questions:**
    1. Has Metrolinx provided staff and/or consultants with Go Train current and forecasted ridership data?
    2. Has Metrolinx provided staff and/or consultants with GO Bus current and forecasted ridership data?
    3. Has Metrolinx shared their future conceptual master planning drawings for the GO Train Station including the busway areas with staff and/or consultants?
- h. **Parking:**
  - i. **Questions:**
    1. Has consideration been given to the merits of:
      - a. **" Pedestrian Oriented Main Streets"**: Street parking on Cross Avenue is required to enhance walkability and livability, not to be a desert wasteland devoid of people with potential safety issues? Good Example: similarly wide urban streets in Spain that work well.
      - b. **Parking Garages** to free up space for much more valuable people oriented activities at ground level?

**Midtown Committee of the Whole:**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide feedback and questions, in particular Councillors Janet Haslett-Theall and Dave Gittings who have given it their all.

Please correct any errors and omissions.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Bill McCreery

Oakville