

Good evening Mayor Burton, Members of Council, and Town Staff,

As Mr. O'Meara has previously pointed out, things have changed in Oakville in terms of affordable housing for young people. My mother bought a century home on [REDACTED] when she was 24. It cost just over three times her annual salary as a second-year teacher. Today, that home, which sadly my mother sold long ago, would cost 25 times my annual salary. I cannot buy a small condo for less than 8-10 times my annual income, and as a single man, I cannot qualify for the mortgage. My lawyer brother has had to move 1 ¼ hours away to afford a small home in a place that reminds him of the Oakville in which he grew up, not the densified and increasingly less green urban place that it is becoming. If he has a family, he will now have to rely on the government for daycare, instead of much preferred family help.

Having said all this, "Four as of right" is not the solution. It has the potential to ruin every neighbourhood in Oakville, and make the town a much less green and healthy place for family life. I have three main questions for tonight's meeting.

First, the legal status of these additional units is unclear to me. Are they planned as Rentals, Freeholds, or Condos?

- If they are to be rental only, I don't want them. I want to own my own home. I don't need a new home with granite countertops and four bathrooms. I want to have a home in a neighbourhood where I can raise a family. Is my generation to be forced into permanent tenancy?
- It is unclear from the draft plans and by-law amendments whether these will enable the property owner to sever freestanding units (which I thought was currently prohibited by the Planning Act).
- At the virtual meeting held earlier this year, I listened to my contemporaries begging for an affordable basement apartment. I understand their housing dilemma. I am a university educated professional and have worked full time for eight years. I live at home as I have not the money to buy, despite conscientious saving. Is this our Federal and Provincial governments' solution to the crisis facing young people – to force municipalities to damage existing neighbourhoods, and condemn youth to basement apartments?
- I cannot see my parents, other family members, or their friends renovating their properties to create three units, never mind four. Current owners would have to incur significant costs to construct or refigure their properties. But I can see developers and absentee investors buying up small homes, homes that I still dream I might one day be able to afford, and then razing them to build four-plexes - and in the Sheridan area, 4-storey housing - housing that will be completely unaffordable, and at the same time destroy the nature of every Oakville neighbourhood.

Second, I am worried about the ability of the Town to ensure that Codes (building and fire) are met and that substandard construction is not used.

- Sadly, it took two years for the Town to issue compliance orders for a substandard, non-complying new-build that caused repeated flooding of my grandmother's house next door because of grade and drainage problems, despite repeated complaints from us. The new owners also had to sue the owner-builder because the property was sold without code infractions being identified. What's to stop this from happening over and over again throughout every Town neighbourhood?
- More traffic in residential neighbourhoods will make it unsafe for family life, for children and seniors.
- The creation of "ghettos" will lead to more social problems – more addictions, mental health problems, urban loneliness, all of which are problems seriously impacting my generation.
- Restricting parking to one space per unit is unrealistic. Few families can exist with only one vehicle given work demands, children's sports, etc.
- But without this restricted parking, there will be no yard space for family living. Where are the next generation's children going to play safely? The minimum size for these lots is unspecified. On many smaller lots, the backyards, which should be the primary recreational area for families, will be given over to hardscape.
- This will result in on-street parking nightmares.

Third, I have concerns about the Sheridan College Housing Area.

- If this is meant for students attending Sheridan, then it should be built on Sheridan property and run by the College. Offloading it onto private owners or more likely developers, will not result in affordable housing for students, who already graduate with large amounts of student debt.
- The high turnover of student housing could mean that these units will not be well-maintained.
- The identified area for this development is a significant area of single family housing on which four storeys and "four as of right" will have a detrimental effect on property values. It will also have a detrimental effect on nearby areas outside the Sheridan College area. My grandmother's home is in nearby [REDACTED]. We are hoping that one day division of monies from eventual sale of this property will provide intergenerational help and enable family members to have some help toward the purchase of their own homes. With the increase in the capital gains tax, we already anticipate a potential loss in value. We cannot afford to see any further loss.

I thought Oakville's plan had been to gently densify in new areas where there is room for new construction in growth nodes and corridors, and to leave established neighbourhoods alone. The Provincial and Federal governments cannot be allowed to ruin neighbourhoods and leave huge bills to deal with infrastructure and the many social and other costs related to poorly planned and pressured urbanization. Although there appears to be some hope for a change of thinking on Midtown, family formation and pride in Oakville as a hometown that prioritizes neighbourhood community and the environment has been largely ignored for over a year of consultations. Likewise, "Four as of right" threatens my generation with the prospect of an Oakville with poorer quality and crowded, but still expensive, rental housing in a town with fewer trees and green space. This does not give my generation hope for a better life and could very well contribute to further deterioration of the addiction and mental health crisis as well as the loneliness crisis in our increasingly urban municipality where just this past weekend I was saddened to meet a young man screaming for help at the corner of Cross and Trafalgar.

We need real solutions, not hasty responses to a Federal government desperate to look good at our expense.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Stephen Johnson