

## **WE LOVE OAKVILLE**

Delegation to Oakville Town Council

May 23, 2023

Midtown OPA

WLO is a consortium of Residents Associations in Oakville. Individual RAs will be delegating with more specific issues from the perspective of their members.

To save time and avoid some duplication, our delegation is high level and covers key issues we are concerned with.

The current housing environment in Ontario is driven by high prices, low inventory and projections of high levels of new immigrants needing places to live.

The Provincial Gov't has passed several bills designed to speed up construction and reduce time and cost for developers to produce units to meet a target of 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years. These create significant financial and social risks to communities while reducing zoning restrictions on developers.

29 Ontario municipalities have signed Housing Pledges to the Province which essentially means we are competing for new housing starts.

As Midtown will be the largest project in Oakville's history, now is the time to work together to make sure we get it right. That means at least consistent with past quality of our Town planning and high level of residents' satisfaction with our Oakville neighbourhoods.

This OPA is a guiding document for town planners and to a large extent an aspirational document for us to meet our ambitious Housing Pledge. It does not set any rules for developers.

Oakville has pledged 33,000 new homes over the next 10 years. As such, we are competing with the other growth centres in GTHA for new residents.

We think Midtown can be a unique neighbourhood reflecting Oakville's spirit and lifestyle rather than just another high rise destination. We need this OPA to show how can we be different and better than the competition.

We believe that our new neighbourhood should be developed based on liveability, sense of community and quality of life rather than price per square foot

**We want this Official Plan Amendment to firmly reflect that:**

- There needs to be a balanced mix of singles, families, and seniors units to create a “livable community”, not huge towers filled with small units for first time buyers
- Midtown amenities need to include adequate green spaces that are interesting, useful and accessible to all residents and visitors to Oakville.
- There will be a focus to provide local employment for residents of Oakville and Midtown
- There must be financial fairness for both current and future tax payers in Oakville

**Concerns we share with residents**

Oakville will incur significant expenditures to provide services for Midtown. With reduced development charge recoveries this creates significant financial risks to existing residents

Oakville has signed a significant housing pledge. Are we confident in our population estimates (which seem to be moving targets) which will be used to guide the development of services and infrastructure?

There will be considerable pressure on Cornwall and Trafalgar Roads, neither of which can be widened. Have mitigation factors been planned sufficiently?

There will be considerable pressures on police and fire services, transit, child care spaces and social services.

Parkland and green space is extremely limited within the development. Are existing facilities north and south of the QEW able to handle this increase in population? Will they be accessible?

School and school transportation capacity is already stretched to the limit. Can we find classrooms for our new children?

The renditions of Midtown at “town halls” are “ eye candy” as they show townhouses, wide open green spaces and lots of blue sky – clearly not realistic ? What will it really look like ??

We have referred to reduced DC recoveries and financial risk incurred by the Town of Oakville. However, permitted projects have no deadline or deliverables on behalf of the developers. How is this fair? Are there contingency plans if targets are not realized?

We see only applications for high density residential towers with lower blocks allocated for commercial purposes. Do we anticipate significant employment and more jobs available in Midtown? What can the OPA do to encourage this?

### **Wrapping up...**

- ✓ We want Midtown to be a vibrant new community to be enjoyed by new and current Oakville residents as well as visitors.
- ✓ We want to invite young people, families and senior citizens to live in this community.
- ✓ We need Midtown to be a financial success for both developers and citizens
- ✓ Since this plan will cover 30 or more years of development in the heart of Oakville, we need vision, planning and consensus now to ensure it succeeds as we all hope and trust it will.
- ✓ Now is the time to ensure all parties engaged in the Midtown project – the Town, developers and Queen’s Park - communicate and work together for the future success of the project and liveability of Oakville
- ✓ We think this OPA, as presented, is a missed opportunity for us to clearly communicate our vision of what we want Midtown to be and lay down guidelines to help make our vision a reality.
- ✓ We understand that updating this OPA is a first step.

We know:

- the Town has limited enforcement powers over developers,
- that the provincial government legislation has recently enacted many policies that favour developers over local municipalities,
- that a great majority of Ontario Land Tribunal decisions support developers over local governments, and
- that a single Ministerial Zoning Order could instantly over-ride our plans

But we believe that we must actively work to promote our vision for Midtown, beyond aspirational “hopes” and pretty pictures that currently make up the Official Plan Amendment.

We need a more specific plan. We need to set our standards of what we expect this development to be.

If we don't clearly articulate our vision and objectives now, we fear that Midtown could end up being just another collection of tall towers in a concrete jungle.

**Ted Haugen**  
**Rick Snidal**  
WeLoveOakville