Community Planning Department
Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes:
March 26, 2026 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)
Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Item #2:
1376 & 1382 Plains Rd. E.

Design Review:
First Review at Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel (BUD)

Application Type:
Pre-consultation for Official Plan Amendment & Zoning Bylaw Amendment

		present	absent
Members of the Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel			
Matt Reid (Chair)	BUD Member	✓	
Jackie VanderVelde (Vice Chair)	BUD Member	✓	
David deGroot	BUD Member	✓	
Jessica Hawes	BUD Member		✓
Mike Flint	BUD Member		✓
Nigel Tai	BUD Member	✓	
Alexandru Taranu	BUD Member	✓	
Christopher Moise	BUD Member		✓
Timmithea Chan	BUD Member	✓	
City Staff			
Mariana DaSilva	Planner, Development Review	✓	
Kyle Poole	Planner, Urban Design	✓	
William Wallace	Supervisor, Development Review	✓	
Proponent & Design Team			
Cale Vanderveen	Bousfields Inc.	✓	
David Felletta	Bousfields Inc.	✓	
Claudia Di Costanzo	WZMH Architects	✓	
Florence Tam	WZMH Architects	✓	
Sam Mandelbaum	Land Ownership Group	✓	

Disclosure of Conflict-of-Interest:
None.

City Staff Presentation Overview:
City Staff presented an overview of the development proposal, which was submitted through a pre-consultation for proposed amendments to the City's Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw. City Staff's presentation provided a brief overview of the proposed development along with the existing and upcoming context of the surrounding neighbourhood.

City Staff asked the BUD Panel members for design advice in the following three areas:

1. Context & Public Realm
   How does the proposal respond to the future vision of the Burlington Major Transit Station Area (MTSA)? What improvements could assist in integrating the proposal into the broader MTSA vision?

2. Built Form & Site Design
   How could the site design and built form better assist in ensuring an activated and engaging public realm, while prioritizing the pedestrian experience?

3. Open Space & Sustainability
   Does the project provide meaningful and usable open space or amenity space? Is the open space or amenity space appropriately sized and well located?

Proponent Presentation Overview:
The Proponent and Design Team presented the site and area context, including key planning framework considerations with a focus on the proposed development and its design. Key ideas expressed in the presentation included:

- the location of the site is south of Plains Road East, west of Brant Street within the Burlington GO Major Transit Station Area (MTSA).
- a brief development overview including key site statistics, subject property size, frontage, surrounding site context and other proposal details.
- the locations of two municipal lanes, abutting the site directly east and west of the site to which the property owner has purchased approximately half of the west municipal lane.
- highlighting the intended severance and purchase of a portion of Canadian National Railway (CN) corridor, of which the property owner currently holds an existing easement agreement over.
- a brief overview of the MTSA policy framework, including OPA 2 which was noted to be under appeal by the landowner.
- a synopsis of the conditionally approved City of Burlington Community Planning Permit System (CPPS), intended to replace the existing Zoning Bylaw and Site Plan Approval process.
- identification of an 11-storey maximum height as per Schedule B-3 of the CPPS.
- an overview of the proposed site plan, including the proposed crash wall along the CN Rail corridor.
- an overview of the underground and surface parking layout, including vehicle and service delivery access routes.
- a summary of the proposed floor plans, perspectives and architectural elevations, with context of the surrounding built form.

BUD Panel Contextual Questions:

BUD Panel members asked the Proponent's Design Team the following clarifying questions. Answers below were provided by the Proponent's Design Team.

Q1: What is the distance (walking distance) to the Burlington GO station?

- The Design Team noted the site is within an 800 m radius of the Burlington GO station, or about a 12-minute walk as pedestrians would need to travel along Plains Road East.

Q2: The proposed height seems to be a significant departure from what is envisioned within this portion of the Burlington GO MTSA. What would be your main urban design arguments on why 25 storeys is appropriate on this site at the edge of the MTSA?

- The Design Team noted the Regional Official Plan policies highlight that heights and densities should generally be maximized within Major Transit Station Areas.
- Also, policy notes that the highest heights and densities are to be directed to the Burlington GO MTSA specifically.
- It is the opinion of the Design Team that 11 storeys are generally permitted on all intensification corridors within the City (e.g. Brant Street) and therefore 11 storeys are not providing any additional height, reflective of that MTSA designation.
- The City's Policy Planning Team noted that it is looking to maximize and optimize the amount of density on the site subject to the review of compatibility.
- The majority of the transit routes pass Plains Road and Fairview Street, connecting directly to the Burlington GO station.

Q3: What is the source of the emerging context and 'shadow towers' demonstrated as ghosted in on adjacent sites? What is the rational for this?

- A key point is that this area is not only an MTSA, but the City's new Urban Growth Center.

Summary of BUD Panel Advice:

BUD Panel members provided the following design comments for consideration with respect to the three guiding questions posed by City Staff. Answers below were provided by the BUD Panel members.

1. **CONTEXT & PUBLIC REALM**
   How does the proposal respond to the future vision of the Burlington Major Transit Station Area (MTSA)? What improvements could assist in integrating the proposal into the broader MTSA vision?

- From the City's CPPS Schedule, greater height and density is envisioned within closer proximity to the Burlington GO station itself, tapering off towards the outer edges of the MTSA. This is a well-established principle of transit-oriented development.
- The transition from a 25-storey tower building to an existing mid-rise or low-rise area is quite abrupt. The tower typology as presented is considerably not the best fit for the current context and what functions as a predominately suburban area.
- A stronger, more grounded base to the building was suggested as being more fitting to the context. A two-storey commercial condition was suggested as an option for being more fitting of the context while offering opportunities for street activation.
- The walking distance to the Burlington GO station was noted as 20 minutes as opposed to 12 minutes, further reinforcing the location of the site on the periphery of the MTSA.
- Shifting the height apex from the station center to the edge of the MTSA was suggested to have significant impacts on the emerging built form and secondary planning rational.

2. **BUILT FORM & SITE DESIGN**
   How could the site design and built form better assist in ensuring an activated and engaging public realm, while prioritizing the pedestrian experience?

- A challenge exists in securing the proposed vehicular site access, which requires City input and approval if it is to be approved in the current location.

- Provided the context of the surrounding rail corridors, consideration for alternative material types other than a glass building were noted.
- In dealing with different parameters such as sun, wind and heat exposure, further consideration for not having four identical facades was suggested as being worthy of additional design exploration.
- As this site and those to the east redevelop, the importance for discussions with the City on a cohesive and unified urban streetscape were stated.
- Alterations in built form were suggested to provide additional interest to the building while respecting interface with the neighbouring property and the fact that the adjacent property to the west will likely not redevelop provided its site constraints.
- With respect to the podium of the building, the following recommendations were offered:
    - The podium of the building was suggested as a key design element to be used to connect existing and proposed or past and future in a sensitive manner. The podium was suggested to be an opportunity to blend the height, architecture and rhythm of the surrounding neighbourhood and act as a buffer or bridge to the MTSA.
    - For the current width of Plains Road East, there appears to be a six-storey datum, which could potentially be better reflected into the base or podium of the development (i.e. a potentially higher podium to offset some reduction in total height).
    - The height of the podium was suggested as possibly requiring adjustment, based on the City's vision for the corridor and desired street wall height.

3. OPEN SPACE & SUSTAINABILITY

Does the project provide meaningful and usable open space or amenity space? Is the open space or amenity space appropriately sized and well located?

- Being adjacent to an active rail corridor, screening and sound mitigation for the outdoor, rooftop amenity area was suggested as being beneficial to residents.
- Should the rooftop amenity area not be chosen as the preferred option, it was suggested a green roof maybe an appropriate alternative use of the space.
- Where outdoor amenity space is provided, ensure that it reflects the users of the building and is more than just BBQs and outdoor seating.

End of Item #2.