

Pilon, Janet

Subject: UHOP changes - concerns about 354 King St W

From: Denise Minardi

Sent: Friday, April 17, 2020 4:03 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

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Mayor Eisenberger and Members of Council,

The City of Hamilton's vision statement is, to be the best place to raise a child and age successfully. It is with this vision in mind that I am writing this email. I have concerns about amendments that are being considered for the City of Hamilton Urban Hamilton Official Plan (UHOP).

The Hamilton Official Plan emphasizes the need for communities that are complete, where opportunities to live, work, learn, shop, and play are provided and are accessible; where healthy and safe lifestyles are supported by quality built and natural environments; where diverse Neighbourhoods are unique in character and enable a variety of lifestyle choices and housing opportunities for all and vibrant, where interesting and creative streetscapes and human scale public places are created through quality design, pedestrian amenities, and attention to land use mix. I have read the UHOP, as well as supporting documents such as the transit-oriented corridor zones document and supporting by-laws and support much of what they embody.

I agree that residential intensification is necessary with the caveat that it needs to respect the regulations established by the UHOP. High density dwelling intensification is most appropriate in the city core, with the revitalization of Jackson Square, and the surrounding area. It must include housing ownership and rental opportunities for all Hamiltonians including students, families and professionals with different income levels. I moved to the Strathcona neighbourhood 5 years ago because of its proximity to the downtown core, transit availability and its community feel. I looked at other developments, such as the Royal Connaught and the Acclamation condominiums, but decided that I would rather be in a community with an existing neighbourhood. In the condominium in which I live, 75 Queen St N, 75% of the units are 3 bedrooms and 25% of the units are 2 bedrooms. Every floor has 8 units so that residents get to know each other which has become especially important given the circumstances surrounding COVID-19. In 4 of the 8 units on my floor, there are families, either with school age children like myself, or elderly parents who now live with their children. I like the proximity to schools and parks, and while I am concerned about the busy streets at King and Queen, and constant truck traffic along Queen St N, I felt that this neighbourhood is a good fit for myself and my family.

I was surprised to find out, when I attended a community meeting on February 21, that there are amendments to the City of Hamilton Official Plan that have been brought forward to council in regard to the building at Queen Street N and 354 King St West.

I noted several parts of the UHOP including Chapter B – Communities 3.3 that the intent of this Plan is to create compact and interconnected, pedestrian- oriented, and transit-supportive communities within which all people can attain a high quality of life. Achieving this vision requires careful attention to urban design in both the public and private realms with attention to how those realms work together. The public realm is associated with planning and design issues in areas such as roads, sidewalks, plazas, parks, and open space, owned by the City and other public agencies. The private realm includes areas within private property boundaries, which may or may not be open to the public but are physically and visibly connected to the public realm. The policies of this section direct design in both the public and private realms. I made a connection here to the Good Shepherd Centre that I regularly walk through when doing my shopping in the neighbourhood throughout the week. This is a property that is built to scale and compliments the neighbourhood, providing housing and green space for many Strathcona residents. It is pedestrian friendly, houses families and vulnerable residents and is set back from King Street West so that one does not feel the press of the traffic, and is well integrated into the community.

Walking through the neighbourhood, I noted that most of the multi-dwelling housing is 6 stories so I looked up the scale for the Strathcona neighbourhood. The UHOP states that scale in 3.5.7 For medium density residential uses, the *net residential density* shall be greater than 60 units per hectare and not greater than 100 units per hectare.

3.5.8 For medium density residential uses, the maximum height shall be six storeys.

The UHOP further states in 4.6.8 Additional height up to a total of eight storeys may be permitted without an amendment to this Plan, provided the applicant demonstrates:

a) there are no adverse shadow impacts created on existing residential uses within adjacent lands designated Neighbourhoods;

b) buildings are progressively stepped back from adjacent areas designated Neighbourhoods. The Zoning by-law may include an angular plane requirement to set out an appropriate transition and stepping back of heights; and,

c) buildings are stepped back from the street to minimize the height appearance from the street, where necessary.

I feel that the construction of buildings that are 6 stories along King St W, York St and Main St W could support the goal of intensification while maintaining the integrity of the existing neighbourhoods.

The amendments that have been requested by the developer go well beyond what is permitted by the UHOP and will adversely impact the Strathcona neighbourhood in a multitude of ways. My concerns are that a mainly residential neighbourhood will be transformed with a largely transitional population moving into a high-density building with little space for new families. Adding even more traffic congestion to very busy streets puts at risk the safety of the many children and older adults who live in the Strathcona community. The increased traffic flow in an already busy part of the neighbourhood is a hazard. Even before construction began at the corner of Queen St N and King St W, there were times when the traffic is backed up from the lights at King St W to Peter St and I must wait to turn right onto Queen St N. There are 550 elementary students, 230 middle school students and hundreds of Westdale and McMaster students who are walking, riding bikes and accessing transit in Strathcona to get to school daily. The addition of hundreds of tenants and their vehicles, in need of parking, and coming and going during peak traffic times, is of great concern and at odds with the Vision Zero Plan.

My other concern is that this will make other communities vulnerable to planning changes as more developers apply for amendments to the UHOP, which can be approved without the community knowing or understanding what the changes really means to their neighbourhood. While intensification should happen, the loss of our communities and neighbourhoods must not be the result of this. The vision of the UHOP should not be diminished, becoming a hollow document that no longer guides the growth of the City of Hamilton. As an elected official, you have a duty to listen to the community and weigh the odds of increased revenue for the City of Hamilton with the well-being of its residents and neighbourhoods. Please carefully consider what will make Hamilton the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

Sincerely, Denise Minardi, Strathcona resident