



SUBJECT: Revised Tall Building Design Guidelines

TO: Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Planning and Building Department

Report Number: PB-25-17

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 155-03-10

Date to Committee: May 2, 2017

Date to Council: May 15, 2017

Recommendation:

Approve the revised Tall Building Guidelines dated May 2017.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present the revised Tall Building Guidelines dated May 2017.

The proposed guidelines align with the following objectives in Burlington's Strategic Plan 2015-2040:

A City that Grows

- Promoting Economic Growth

1.1.g Burlington's downtown is vibrant and thriving with greater intensification attracting both businesses and people to enjoy the quality of life.

- Intensification

1.2.h Burlington has a downtown that supports intensification and contains green space and amenities, has vibrant pedestrian-focused streets, is culturally active and is home to a mix of residents and businesses.

1.2.i Architecture and buildings are designed and constructed to have minimal impact on the environment reflecting urban design excellence that create buildings and public spaces where people can live, work or gather.

A City that Moves

- Increased Transportation Flows and Connectivity

- 2.1.b Mobility hubs are being developed and supported by intensification and *built forms that allow walkable neighbourhoods to develop. *Metrolinx will have worked with the city to ensure the creation of hubs aligns with intensification and built form objectives.
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Background and Discussion:

The City is no longer growing outwards via greenfield development. To preserve our urban/rural boundary, the City is now growing from within. As such, the development pressures of intensification and tall buildings are becoming increasingly evident.

When carefully designed and located, tall buildings become a distinct and defining component of a city's character, forging a memorable skyline and establishing city landmarks.

Tall building guidelines play an important part in how the City grows. They will help build communities with quality of life and quality of place, and fulfill part of the new Grow Bold strategy by building up, building smart and building beautiful.

Tall building guidelines provide design direction for the components of tall buildings: Building Base (Podium), Building Middle (Tower), and Building Top. Together, they address all aspects of tall buildings and will promote urban design excellence and support vibrant streets.

It is important to note that the land use framework of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law determine where tall buildings are permitted. Tall building guidelines do not enable tall buildings to locate where they would otherwise not be permitted.

On October 3, 2016, Council approved the original Tall Building Guidelines as "interim guidelines". The reason for the "interim" status was to accommodate further consultation with the public and development industry and to facilitate revisions, as needed, prior to enacting the guidelines on a permanent basis.

Consultation

Staff held a public workshop on Saturday January 28, 2017. This workshop included a walking tour of tall buildings in the downtown followed by a presentation and interactive activities to discuss tall buildings and their various design elements. Staff also held a workshop with the development and design community on Monday January 30, 2017. This workshop consisted of a short presentation followed by a roundtable discussion.

Comments received from the workshops can be generally summarized as follows:

- Provide clarity on the roles of land use planning framework and the guidelines;
- Confirm that the metrics in tall building guidelines reflect best practices;

- Ensure human scale, pedestrian friendly streetscapes, and open/green spaces within and between tall building developments;
- Strengthen the role of established and planned neighbourhood context when considering transitions to adjacent properties;
- Reference Official Plan policies regarding sustainability principles in tall building design; and
- Allow for both flexibility and predictability of the guidelines through development review process.

In April 2017, revised tall building guidelines were posted on the city's website and shared with all participants from the workshops held in January 2017. The revised tall building guidelines were based on comments received from the January 2017 consultations with the public and development/design industry, a further analysis of best practices for tall building guidelines from other municipalities, and the professional experiences of our consultant Brook McIlroy.

No further comments were received from the general public. Some additional comments were received from the Sustainable Development Committee and they have been directed to Policy staff for consideration in the new Official Plan. Additional comments were also received by the development industry requesting further clarity on certain matters.

On May 15, 2017, staff held another roundtable discussion with the development industry to address their remaining concerns. It was a highly collaborative meeting where we were able to openly discuss all remaining questions and comments and find a positive resolution. The outcome of this final consultation was additional "wordsmithing" providing predictability and clarity on some guidelines without actually changing their intent. The May 2017 tall building guidelines reflect these final edits.

Financial Matters:

The agreed upon cost of preparing these revised guidelines has an upset limit of \$20,000.00 excluding HST and disbursements. At the time of writing this report, staff have received invoices from Brook McIlroy totalling \$14,754.59 (including HST and disbursements) for this work.

Source of Funding

Funding for this work comes from the Planning and Building Department operating budget for consulting services.

Connections:

An outcome of the Strategic Plan is the City Manager's Workplan which identifies the creation of an urban design advisory panel and an awards program to celebrate design excellence in the city. The proposed tall building guidelines will assist staff with the administration of these initiatives by making design considerations an explicit part of all tall building development applications.

Public Engagement Matters:

Staff held multiple consultation sessions with the general public and development industry to discuss the principles of design excellence for tall buildings, provide clarity on the role of the guidelines in relation to the broader land use planning framework, and facilitate edits to the guidelines where needed to ensure consistency and predictability. These consultation sessions were highly collaborative, informative, and created "buy-in" from all participants. The May 2017 tall building guideline document is better product as a result of these consultation sessions.

Conclusion:

To help manage the pressures of intensification, a set of tall building design guidelines are needed to support and supplement our new approach to growth – Grow Bold. This report recommends endorsement of the revised Tall Building Guidelines dated May 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

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Manager of Urban Design X7892

Appendices:

- a. City of Burlington Tall Building Guidelines May 2017

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, Director of Finance and Director of Legal. Final approval is by the City Manager.