

Good evening Mayor Burton and Council, My name is Boyd Waites, president of Oakville Lakeside Residents Association, I am speaking to you on behalf of the coalition of South East residents associations including Oakville Lakeside, Joshua Creek, Trafalgar Chartwell and Chartwell MapleGrove Residents Associations.

**I am speaking to agenda items 4, 5 and 6.**

I'd like to start by congratulating the Town on the vision for the Downtown Projects, including the Streetscape and the Cultural Hub. It was some years ago that a decision was made to confirm that the downtown area was indeed the natural DOWNTOWN for OAKVILLE; given it's heritage as the birthplace of Oakville, it's natural setting and existing cultural and the artistic landscape, it is the Downtown for the whole of our community both East, West, North and South. These projects are a reflection of the aspirations of our Town's residents, they express our wish to truly be the most livable town and support that ideal, cultural components of any town are the flagships that unite and help to create a true sense of a larger community, they benefit and enrich the whole community and it is our hope that these plans will come to fruition and provide us with the very best facilities to be enjoyed by ALL residents, with a pride in our Town in future years. While the improvements to Streetscape are more imminent and in the case of Lakeshore rd.; severely needed, the Cultural components such as the performing arts center will take many years to become reality. We strongly support the vision and the ideals and want to see these projects move forward to enrich the lives of residents in Oakville far into the future.

We do have some specific comments on what is being presented to you this evening:

**Firstly Item 4. The Downtown Plan Implementation**

Recommendation 1: to refer a commitment for implementation to the 2016 budget

- a. There is a true need to improve the Downtown Streetscape and we feel that Lakeshore Rd is key, having a locked down timeframe for this project

will be of benefit to local business and residents alike, those timeframes will assist in terms of needed planning – we support it

- b. We support conversion to a two-way St system in this timeframe
- c. Interim Improvements to the Oakville Performing Arts Centre – while we do support funding to maintain the buildings in a reasonable state of repair, we are surprised to see 4.5million dollars allocated on top of the amount of the 2.2 million for maintenance, towards improvements to the lobby and administrative spaces (in fact we are unsure of the detail) – we do not feel this is justified given the on-going plans to completely renovate or rebuild the performing arts center and also we do not see where this might address the original issues such as poor sound quality and accessibility within the building, which of course are considered in the long term plans which may be impacted as a result – we urge council to remove the provision of 4.5million from the recommendation
- d. We are generally in favor of moving ahead with phase 1 for the Downtown Cultural Hub, however given the feedback we have received both in our Survey of residents, verbal discussions, our own and town meetings we cannot support phase 1 without the following concerns addressed:

-we agree with going ahead with a flagship library including a digital focus and existing library functions however we do not believe the location is finalized and suggest removing the word 'central' from this paragraph

-we do support a strong and healthy Oakville Gallery located within the downtown but we would ask that consideration be given to requiring the Oakville Galleries to expand it's mandate, given receipt of this injection of municipal funds; to include not only contemporary art, which is appreciated by some, but also to open up the programming to include, more accessible and appealing arts events such as Art Fairs, Artist in Residence, interactive arts learning, local shows etc. We see there is an opportunity here, with the possible location of the Post-Office site to interact in original and creative ways within the downtown.

Additionally we are concerned on Gairloch Gardens use and want to see a commitment to maintain it as a public use resource into the future.

Recommendation 2: Staff be directed to test the market – market sounding

In regards to this item, we are very aware as residents and taxpayers that the Town, within its own limited budget would not be able to fund these visionary (and costly) projects by itself. Residents are unwilling to allow Tax levies or Tax hikes in order to fund these projects but do express willingness for other levels of government support and for commercial partnerships as well as collaboration with other institutions such as Sheridan College. We fully support the Town in taking the necessary steps in order to explore the many and varied possible funding opportunities by testing the Market and we see this as a vital step forward in the campaign to ensure these facilities do in fact become reality. We request full transparency with this undertaking between the town and residents.

#### **Item 5. Downtown Cultural Hub Master Plan**

I will address both Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That Council Receive the report

Recommendation 2: That Council Approve Key Elements

This has been an extensive process to get the Downtown Cultural Hub project to this point and we certainly appreciate the effort of Town Staff in this regard. There has been a lot of very good work done. As discussed earlier; this is an extremely important project to the entire Town, one that, we will all be very proud of into the future and one that will shape the Downtown for many, many years to come. We believe it is imperative to 'get it right' we also believe that there are still many questions relating to the initial key elements.

Not least of which are the following points, coming from respondents to our survey and also from verbal communications and meetings with stake holders and the town.

- concern that the wider Town residents do not seem to be as involved, even though as I stated these projects are of a scope that they certainly affect all of us. We need to do as much as possible to ensure engagement from all geographies in Oakville.

-There are questions related to the sale of public lands and those locations together with public access and the benefits that can be derived as well as access to those currently existing public lands if air rights are in fact sold.

-From our survey many residents suggested further options may be needed, therefore we do not see the options as finalized at this stage.

-Our survey shows that individuals feel “somewhat informed” but not fully engaged as of June 2015, since that time there are new thoughts and moving parts in the plan as is now put forward and we feel it is incumbent on us to make sure residents are informed

At this time we ask that Council to consider deferral of both items 1 and 2 and direct that another round of consultation be undertaken so we can be sure that all stakeholders are fully and properly informed and we as residents can fully support the plan without too many questions still left un-answered. We are asking for more time on these highly important plans.

### **Item 6. Downtown Parking Strategy**

Parking in downtown is a priority, from all sides, all groups agree on this.

Recommendation 1: We are very encouraged that the Town took to heart our recommendation to widen the parking strategy and we applaud the new option 2 to both bring the parking space underground, making use of a wider area than originally contemplated, and to use the space above, particularly on lot 2 in order to bring additional people through commercial office space or residential into the area. It is both less expensive AND supplies more parking spaces than option 1. We recommend that Council receive this report and we strongly encourage that the Market Sounding exercise includes this parking scenario.

Recommendation 2: Interim parking during the construction period for Lakeshore Rd is also vital to Downtown, we fully support the Town's plan to explore further possibilities related to interim parking and would encourage further discussion and consultation in this area as well as any other mitigation steps during the construction phase.

Thank you for your time.