

**Submission to Local Planning Appeal Tribunal Regarding ClubLink,  
Glen Abbey Golf Club; Case Numbers PL171084; PL180158;  
PL180580; MM180022; MM170004**

**Submitted by Doug McKirgan on behalf of We Love Oakville**

**To The Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (Attention: Case worker: Jason Kwan)**

We welcome this opportunity to communicate to the members of the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) the serious concerns that citizens of Oakville have with respect to the ClubLink application to develop the Glen Abbey lands.

**About We Love Oakville**

We Love Oakville is a not for profit citizens organization comprising a coalition of nine Residents Associations from all across Oakville. (See Appendix I) We were established to research and speak on issues affecting all the citizens of Oakville as contrasted with issues that impact a particular group, sector or Residents Association. We Love Oakville is non political and does not endorse or support any particular political party, Regional or Town councilor, or mayoralty candidate. All the Residents Associations that make up We Love Oakville have contributed to this submission and fully support these positions and our conclusion that this appeal should be rejected.

Our intent is to provide you with our input as very concerned citizens. We are not urban planning professionals nor have we retained legal counsel to argue the technicalities of the various policies and legislation that govern land use decisions.

As citizens we want and expect our Town and Region to embrace and practice long term land use planning that manages growth in compliance with Provincial policy , curbs and prevents urban sprawl and protects our natural environment and our cultural heritage landscapes. Consequently we place a lot of importance and trust in the municipal planning process at both the Town and Regional level, which is put at risk by this application. Our submission will therefore focus heavily on the integrity and credibility of the municipal planning process.

**Our Position**

In our view, this appeal should be rejected for the following reasons:

- It fails to conform with both The Town of Oakville's and Halton Region's official plans and it was rejected by the councils of both Oakville and Halton Region on this basis. We point out that section 2.1 of the Ontario Planning Act requires that:

*2.1 (1) When an approval authority or the Tribunal makes a decision under this Act that relates to a planning matter, it shall have regard to,  
(a) any decision that is made under this Act by a municipal council or by an approval authority and relates to the same planning matter; and  
(b) any information and material that the municipal council or approval authority considered in making the decision described in clause (a).*

- It contravenes Oakville Council's 2017 decision, made in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act to officially designate the Glen Abbey Golf Course as a Cultural Heritage Landscape due to its remarkable architecture and history as home to 30 Canadian Open Championships.
- It would have a serious detrimental impact on the neighbourhoods surrounding the Glen Abbey Golf Course, Oakville's unique character, our natural environment, the Town's long term planning processes, financial resources and quality of life for all citizens in Oakville.

## **Guiding Principles**

This application conflicts with and violates many of the principles on which the Livable Oakville Official Plan is based, including the following.

### *Designated Growth Areas*

A key guiding principle in the Livable Oakville Official Plan is to direct the majority of growth to identified locations where higher density, transit and pedestrian oriented development can be accommodated. The Livable Oakville Official Plan has been structured so that the majority of new growth to accommodate residential intensification is directed to six growth areas. The Livable Oakville Official Plan has never contemplated nor provided for any intensification of the Glen Abbey Golf Course beyond the existing permissions. ClubLink now wants to change how this land should be used and build 3,222 residential units and construct 5,841 m<sup>2</sup> of retail/commercial space and 5429 m<sup>2</sup> of office/commercial space on this property, which would violate one of the key principles on which the Livable Oakville Official Plan and the Halton Region Official Plan is based.

ClubLinks has owned the The Glen Abbey Golf Course since 1999 and during this time it has been designated as Low Density Private Open Space and Natural Area in the Livable Oakville Official Plan. The owners had never contested or objected to this designation until they commenced their application.

### *Integrated Land Use Planning*

The need for comprehensive and integrated planning is also a fundamental principle of the Oakville Official Plan. The Glen Abbey proposal cannot be evaluated or assessed as a separate project independently from the other growth areas and the integrated

infrastructure that is needed to support all of Oakville such as transit, roads, water and sewage, police and fire protection etc. We believe this is a critical point. The six growth areas together with the other components of the Livable Oakville Official Plan are integrated and interdependent with each other and with non growth areas. And of course there is the impact on the amount of management time and resources needed to effectively execute these growth plans. (Appendix III)

### *Protection of Cultural Heritage and Character*

Another Guiding Principle in the Livable Oakville Official Plan is to preserve, enhance, and protect the distinct character, cultural heritage, living environment, and sense of community of neighbourhoods.

There is no doubt that the ClubLink application would dramatically change the character, environment and community of the property contained in this application and the neighbourhoods adjacent to these lands. Citizens in these neighbourhoods feel strongly that the ClubLink proposal will have a serious detrimental impact.

The Glen Abbey residential area was designed around the golf course, which had been operating since it was designed by Jack Nicklaus in 1976. Accordingly, many areas are oriented to the property which is one of the biggest green areas in Oakville.

Demolishing this Cultural Heritage Landscape at the centre of our community would have a devastating impact.

### **This Development Is Not Consistent With Town and Regional Planning**

In 2016, Oakville Council directed that a review of the Town's urban structure and related policies be undertaken, as a component of the Town's ongoing official plan review. This review stress tested the growth area assumptions and plans in the Official Plan as well as the Town and Region's ability to attain the growth targets imposed by the Province. This review was completed on May 15, 2017, and concluded that the estimated forecast of population and employment growth to 2041 can be accommodated without significant changes to the Town's urban structure, and that additional Growth Areas were not required to meet provincial growth targets

As citizens, we find the Urban Structure Review to be fact based, thorough and the conclusions seem logical and reasonable. The effect of the ClubLink application will be to create a 7th Growth Area, one that was not considered appropriate in the comprehensive urban growth structure analysis completed by the Town.

In the absence of persuasive evidence to the contrary, there is no requirement for the Town and Region to add a seventh growth area to their Official Plans, approve a major project to build high density residential and commercial units, and destroy a Private Open Space and Natural Area that is so important to our community.

As citizens, we believe that this application has been given due process. It has been analyzed by the planning professionals (internal and external), citizens have provided their input, it has been debated at both the lower tier and upper tier municipal governments who unanimously concluded that the proposal should be rejected.

LPAT should protect the integrity of our municipal planning which includes all of Council's decisions that affect this matter including their decision on the heritage designation, the urban structure review and the development application itself. LPAT should follow the direction provided by sections 2.1 of the Planning Act and not force the Town of Oakville and Region of Halton to disrupt and change their Official Plans to build residential and commercial units that are not appropriate, just to accommodate a private sector developer.

### **Protecting Glen Abbey's Cultural Heritage**

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe both require that 'significant cultural heritage landscapes' and cultural heritage resources be 'conserved'.

The Town has completed the process set forth in the Ontario Heritage Act and designated the Glen Abbey Golf Course property as a property of cultural heritage value or interest.

The fact that this application actually seeks to destroy a very significant cultural heritage property which together with the significant opposition of residential and citizen groups, provides further confirmation that this application should be rejected.

While citizens actively participated in this process along with councilors and Town staff, it is our understanding that the owners of Glen Abbey did not challenge the designation before the Conservation Review Board which is the forum under which they were required to challenge the designation if they objected to it.

It should be noted that recent surveys have shown that heritage preservation and the Town's planning process are appreciated and rated highly in satisfaction surveys (80 percent).(Appendix II)

In our view, this process was robust, fair and the conclusions reached are supported by the vast majority of the citizens of Oakville.

LPAT needs to support the process set forth in the Ontario Heritage Act and the desire of citizens to protect Glen Abbey as a cultural heritage landscape.

## **Importance of Sustainable Land Use Planning**

In the last Town Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2019, controlling growth was identified as the top priority for the majority of residents at 65 per cent; followed by Oakville's natural environment (52 per cent) and ease of traveling (50 per cent). (Appendix II)

Having stable, long term land development and usage planning is essential if Oakville is to achieve its long term aspirations and satisfy residents' expectations while complying with provincial growth requirements. This planning must be led by the Oakville and Halton Region municipalities.

This planning needs to be flexible and adaptive to changing circumstances. But it cannot be led by or driven by the development industry or special interest groups or individual citizens who are pursuing their own agendas. Ad hoc decisions that satisfy individual interests, and not those of the community as a whole, would lead to urban sprawl, costly inefficiencies, environmental damage, poor land usage and all sorts of problems - and must therefore be avoided.

Private sector developers play a critical role in designing and executing projects that fit into the Official Plans. But, private sector developers have a short term focus (get the approval to do the project, do the project and move on to the next project) and are accountable to their shareholders, not the citizens and tax payers. Land use planning needs to have a much longer term horizon and be driven by the municipal governments so that the elected mayors and councilors who approve and oversee these Official Plans and their execution are accountable to the citizens and taxpayers.

As citizens, we view the Livable Oakville Official Plan as the foundation document for land development and use in the Town of Oakville. It is how The Town and its citizens ensure that the growth and evolution of the Town are effectively organized, satisfy provincial requirements and meet the needs of its citizens and stakeholders. It also provides the targets and standards that citizens can use to hold the mayor, town councilors and town management accountable.

We note that the LPAT has approved the Livable Oakville Plan, that the Livable Oakville Plan has been appropriately kept up to date by the municipality and that the Livable Oakville Official Plan conforms with and is consistent with the following:

- Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) which sets the foundation for regulating the development and use of land in Ontario;
- The Province's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe – a long-term plan to manage growth, build complete communities, curb sprawl and protect cultural heritage resources and the natural environment; and

- Halton's Regional Official Plan - which requires the upper tier municipalities to establish a hierarchy of settlement areas

The massive size of this unplanned development proposal will disrupt key elements of the land use planning that have been put in place over many years and the Official Plans that have been produced at both levels of municipal government. If this application were to be successful, citizens would rightly question the credibility and integrity of the municipal planning process and the level of trust that can be placed in Official Plans and the people who prepare, manage and govern them.

We believe that the planning process and the application review process has been thorough and fair and therefore the decisions taken by the councils of the Town of Oakville and Halton Region should be upheld.

### **Questions LPAT Needs To Consider**

The ClubLink proposal has been well prepared and presented. But this should not be the point of focus for LPAT. LPAT cannot assess this huge proposal as a project in isolation from its impact on the land use planning process and the broader Oakville community. This raises some fundamental questions, including:

- (1) Why should LPAT allow a private property owner to force the Town of Oakville and the Region of Halton to overturn The Livable Oakville Official Plan, add a seventh high intensity growth area and initiate a major development project that is not required to meet provincial growth requirements?
- (2) Why should LPAT allow Oakville's precious cultural heritage resource and scarce green space be bulldozed to accommodate a significant unplanned development and the financial interests of a private property owner?
- (3) How could LPAT support non compliance with the Town's cultural heritage landscape designation and the related requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act?
- (4) Why would LPAT support a high density car dependent development, that is not located anywhere near planned transit and the planned transportation corridors on which governments are making a significant financial investment?
- (5) How can LPAT allow the rights of 216,000 citizens in a well planned community to be subjected to contravention by a private property owner seeking financial gains by building a massive high density redevelopment, contrary to provincial planning policy and the Region of Halton and Oakville Official Plans, which do not allow this type of intensification in a mature residential neighbourhood?
- (6) Why would LPAT undo all the time, effort and costs the Town and Region have made in comprehensive land use planning and support unplanned, high density

growth that causes urban sprawl, inefficient allocation of resources, higher costs, frustrations, environmental damage, etc?

We remind LPAT that the ClubLink application is strongly opposed by all the Resident's Associations in Oakville. We believe that LPAT has a responsibility to support and protect municipally-led land use planning and the credibility of the official plans that are produced. Approval of this application will destroy the trust and confidence citizens and taxpayers have in proper land use planning and the Official Plans of both the Town and the Region. The outcome of this case will have broad implications for Oakville and other communities in Ontario for years to come.

We thank you for the opportunity to present our views on this very important decision and we would be pleased to provide additional information or respond to any questions you may have.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix I - Composition of We Love Oakville



We Love Oakville is a consortium of nine Residents Associations in Oakville: Bronte Village Residents Association (BVRA), Chartwell Maple Grove Residents Association (CMGRA), Clearview Oakville Community Alliance (COCA), Coronation Park Residents Association (CPRA), Joshua Creek Residents Association (JCRA), North Oakville Ward 7 Residents Association (NOW7), Oakville Lakeside Residents Association (OLRA), Trafalgar Chartwell Residents Association (TCRA), and West River Residents Association (WVRA). These residents associations represent over 84,000 residents in Oakville.

The following additional RA's have expressed their support of this submission: Bronte Creek Community Residents Association (BCCRA), Glen Abbey Neighbourhood Association (GANA), River Oaks Association of Residents (ROAR), and West Kerr Village Residents Association (WKVRA).

### Appendix II - Satisfaction with town services rises to 96 per cent

The results of the town's 2019 Citizen Survey are in and residents give the town top marks! Results show that 81 per cent of residents expressed overall satisfaction with the government of the Town of Oakville, consistent with the ratings from the previous Citizen Survey conducted in 2017. The majority of residents also feel that Oakville is a great place to call home, with 93 per cent of residents stating a strong sense of belonging and feeling safe, and expressing high satisfaction with town services at 96 per cent.

Every two years, the town conducts its citizen survey to track overall satisfaction with town programs and services, identify emerging issues important to the community and to help set future strategic priorities.

"Engaging with our residents is absolutely critical for Council to continually improve Oakville's livability," said Mayor Rob Burton. "The high satisfaction rates we've received in this survey are very encouraging and tell us that Council is on the right track in delivering the high-quality facilities and services that our residents want and need. This year's survey results can also help inform the provincial government's ongoing review of regional municipalities when they evaluate Oakville's governance, decision-making and service delivery."

Key findings from the 2019 Citizen Survey include:



- Residents were asked to rate eight attributes of the Town of Oakville, giving us an overall satisfaction rating of 87 per cent. The highest levels of satisfaction with town attributes were feelings of belonging and safety (93 per cent), quality of buildings/overall appearance (87 per cent) and protection of heritage (82 per cent).
- When it came to rating town services, the town's score ranked extremely high with an overall satisfaction rate of 96 per cent. Results also show that eight out of 12 service areas received satisfaction ratings above 80 per cent. The town's top rated services include parks and green spaces (93 per cent), public libraries (91 per cent), recreation fields and facilities (89 per cent), and recreation programs (88 per cent).
- Overall customer satisfaction scored very high at 88 per cent (up three per cent from 2017).
- Sixty-eight per cent of survey respondents said their preferred method of finding key information on town programs and services is the town's website, with 45 per cent of residents stating that the town's website was the primary way they contacted the town.
- To help the town in planning for the future, residents were asked to choose which priority they would like the town to focus on most. Controlling growth was identified as the top priority for the majority of residents at 65 per cent; followed by Oakville's natural environment (52 per cent) and ease of travelling (50 per cent).

In January and February, Pollara Strategic Insights conducted a 20-minute phone survey to gather quantitative data, where a random sample of 809 residents were asked for their feedback and opinions about their community.

To complement the phone survey, further research was conducted through an online survey. Over 700 responses were received, with results showing high levels of overall satisfaction with the government of the Town of Oakville (77 per cent) as well as with the delivery of town programs and services (76 per cent). When asked about the most important issues facing the town, residents expressed that traffic congestion and growth and development were key issues that the town should focus on to enhance Oakville's livability. Findings also showed that residents connect most with the town through the town's website – both as their first method of contact with the town and how they find information about programs and services.

The town conducted its first Citizen Survey in 2001, then again in 2004 and 2007 before moving to a biennial survey. Year-over-year results have consistently shown residents' high level of overall satisfaction with the government of the Town of Oakville.

(Source ; Town of Oakville website)

## Appendix III - Magnitude Of This Application and Impact On Infrastructure

Comparison of Growth Areas to Glen Abbey Proposal					
Area	Site Area Estimate (ha)	Population <sup>35</sup>	Jobs <sup>36</sup>	People and Jobs	Planned Density (ppl/jobs) per hectare
Uptown	114ha	16,600	3,000	19,600	172
Midtown	100ha	12,000	8,000	20,000	200
Palermo	86ha	5,200	3,800	9,000	105
Kerr	66ha	5,000	1,500	6,500	98
<i>Glen Abbey</i>	<i>57 ha</i>	<i>7,376<sup>37</sup></i>	<i>243</i>	<i>7,618</i>	<i>133</i>
Bronte	40ha	4,500	900	5,400	135
Downtown	25ha	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Comparison of Growth Areas to Glen Abbey Proposal

Magnitude of the Glen Abbey development compared to the six growth areas in Oakville (Source: September 12, 2017 Oakville Planning Services Department Presentation)

The Glen Abbey proposals ranks fifth in land size, third in population, last in jobs, and for practical purposes tied for third with Bronte in planned density. The Town estimates that the 3222 residential unit in the Glen Abbey development would result in an unnecessary increase of approximately 22% in forecasted residential growth (14,390 units) within the built boundary that is anticipated over a 25 year planning period .

This proposal cannot be compared to an application to allow a minor development on a vacant piece of land that was not considered in the Livable Oakville Official Plan. It's size and impact is just too large. It must be viewed as a proposal to add a seventh growth area and in so doing would change the fundamental assumptions and structure of the Livable Oakville Official Plan.

The scale of the proposed development at 53 units per hectare is well above the level of 45 units per hectare, which MTO suggest would require “very frequent bus service” (one bus every five minutes). Yet the property is not on a planned transit route or along a planned tier order transit corridor (Source: Planning Services Department Report, September 12, 2019)

This represents a significant unresolved issue as the entire development was created around a green space which was never meant or intended to be developed. The Planning Service Department concluded:

“It is unlikely that there is any transit strategy that could provide the level and quality of transit services needed to facilitate transit supportive development within the lands,

without diverting resources from existing and already planned services or imposing additional costs for the town.”

It seems to clear to us that the disruption potential of inserting such a large development in to the heart of an established stable neighbourhood is both very significant and unnecessary considering the zoning history of the property and the well established Oakville Official Plan.