

BurlingtonGreen

Dear Members of Council,

Feb 5, 2008

BurlingtonGreen understands that you will be making decisions regarding report # DI – 01-08 on the proposed Performing Arts Centre at your Community & Corporate Services meeting on February 6, 08 and we would like to respectfully offer our input to you for your consideration.

Firstly, we do have concerns regarding the significant budget expenditure estimated for this initiative, as this will result in less funding being available to support environmental initiatives for the city. As Burlington approaches build out, we believe this to be a critical period to ensure necessary planning and support funding is in place to ensure development takes place in a sustainable manner.

The estimated \$75 million dedicated to development projects compared to the proportionately very low funding to support environment related initiatives is a concern. We believe this to be particularly significant at a time when Canadians continue to rank the environment as a number one priority. *“Economic growth with an ecological deficit is anti-economic and makes us poorer rather than richer in the long term” (Toward Sustainable Communities – M. Roseland)*

While we recognize the projected benefits that may result with the addition of a PAC to Burlington, we believe it is important to **first** ensure funding is in place to secure our cities natural resources and that current infrastructure and municipal facilities are upgraded and operating as energy efficiently as possible in order to help mitigate and adapt to climate change. A sustainable city operates with this balanced, visionary approach, ensuring these fundamentals are in place prior to adding more developments to the city.

Does this Council have confidence that it's approved sustainable objectives as identified in Future Focus Seven can be honoured, while supporting the funds required for “the most significant project in Burlington's history”? If the answer is yes **and** the majority of citizens clearly support this initiative, and the PAC project therefore proceeds, we offer our input regarding the report's LEED recommendations.

As “Buildings represent the single largest opportunity to take immediate and measureable steps towards sustainability” (Canada Green Building Council), BurlingtonGreen is pleased that city staff have demonstrated environmental stewardship by including a recommendation of LEED certification for the proposed PAC project. In doing so, not only will it gain recognition as the first LEED certified theatre arts Centre in the country, but more importantly, it is our hope that it will serve as an example to take further action to “green” all current and future projects in the city. It would also provide an important example for citizens, perhaps inspiring them to also take action to live a greener lifestyle.

We have reviewed the LEED related content of the “DSAI” report and it appears that the primary component limiting the upgrade from LEED certified to LEED silver pertains to design capacity issues. *‘...because a theatre is operated at full capacity for only short off-peak periods, the energy savings and payback periods typically required to finance additional mechanical capital costs are not achieved. Building types that have full occupancy for significant parts of the day will recoup energy costs more quickly, thereby reducing the apparent premium for mechanical upgrades”.*

We would therefore ask Council to aim for the higher LEED silver standard by directing staff and the PAC team to explore multi-use opportunities for the centre to increase its day time use. This would be a win-win for the city and the residents as the project would then support a broader range of community interests as well. For example, perhaps the PAC could serve as a lecture hall for post-secondary use? The key here is that sustainable principles support the incorporation of multiple interest group needs into a single project to maximize operational efficiencies and minimize the requirements for additional developments elsewhere in the city.

Thus, while we commend City staff for their recommendation to construct the PAC with LEED certified standards, we hope that you will consider the above mentioned comments from BurlingtonGreen as part of your upcoming decision making process on the issue.

Respectfully,

Amy Schnurr
Communications Co-Chair
BurlingtonGreen