

December 9,

Good evening Mayor Jackson, Chair, Members of Council, staff and citizens of Burlington,

On behalf of the BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association, I thank you for this opportunity to comment on the staff report regarding the General Brock surplus lands (PR-75-09)

As one of our organization's identified objectives is the preservation of parklands and green spaces, we do not support the staff recommendation to dedicate no city funds to secure the parklands at General Brock. We also believe the report does not provide a balanced comprehensive review of the relevant issues required to support a decision by this Committee. A potentially \$9 million dollar investment and loss of irreplaceable green space we believe to be worth of a more thorough approach and resulting document.

It is disappointing that the issue of city wide used green space and the largest school parcel of land to become at risk in the history of Burlington was not offered for comment, input, expertise by this City's environmental staff or the SDV. Not doing so questions the value of the approved strategic principles this city has adopted regarding sustainable planning, if they are not included in the mix? Other municipalities across the province and Country are recognizing the vital role green space has in supporting the quality of life it strives to support – BurlingtonGreen suggests the City needs to better align its words/values with actions and reflect these when reporting to Committee and council and ultimately to the citizens of Burlington.

BurlingtonGreen has already delegated in the past about the environmental benefits of preserving places like General Brock so I am not going to rhyme off the list of research points that speak to this. We would be pleased to provide you with references to documents to support this but frankly, we would argue that this information should have and still can be gathered by city staff as well. Staff have been offered this information and supporting links to review and consider for inclusion in their report but we remain unclear as to why they were not included or if they were considered.

Credible environmental organizations do not only focus on environmental implications of an issue but they also strive to consider the related economic and social considerations as well. This "triple bottom line" approach should not be considered one of benefit to "tree huggers" only but is being employed by countries around the world in an effort to gather information and base their decisions with a more well-rounded approach. Doing so, helps to create and sustain more livable cities.

We believe Council should have this equally dedicated presentation of information before you so that you can make an informed decision based on a variety of considerations. Similarly, it was notable at the recent Nelson Quarry issue deliberations at Regional Council that Councillor D'Amelio, you commented on your inability to support the staff recommendations because while there was strong environmental content, the social and economic comprehensiveness was not there for you in that report.

We all recognize the challenges that come with the provinces Places to Grow mandate to support growing numbers in Halton. Expectations of intensification should not include infill of our remaining pockets of green (whoever own them) in Burlington. To support sustainable growth while preserving a measure of quality of life for all & for the health of the environment, means developing strategies to protect these irreplaceable places of our natural heritage and exploring innovative adaptations to our built areas. A sustainable city strategically chooses *where* intensification happens – it makes more sense to rehabilitate built areas, avoid urban sprawl and not give over our remaining green spaces to support new development.

The staff report does not present to you a comprehensive overview of the positive social fabric, economic prosperity or environmental care relevant to the topic of the General Brock Parklands. It just doesn't work or produce sustainable results if you trade off one component for the other. It only succeeds if these things are seen as dependent on each other, as interconnected.

For example, if we develop this parkland to save money to support infrastructure elsewhere, not only do we lose a valued natural resource that has served the community and beyond for more than four decades, but we deprive ourselves of a green common ground where communities gather (socially), we take away the green canopy of trees that clean the air & the local habitat that supports our ecosystem (environmentally), and we make the city less attractive to new residents and businesses, and hurt the local economy, (economically).

Seeing these three elements as connected requires a big picture long-term view. BurlingtonGreen believes it to be the responsibility of city staff to present these multiple considerations in a balanced way so that you, our city's leaders can make your decision not only respectful to your commitments to the constituents of your wards but also to your important role as civic leaders to preserve the natural heritage and quality of life for Burlington's future.

Thank you for your attention.

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Executive Director
BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association

Note: for more information regarding the social, economic and environmental benefits of green space, you are encouraged to visit www.evergreen.ca where you will find article such as:

"Investigating the Need for Nature in the City"

- *Includes research supporting how urban green space enhances biodiversity, reduces toxins, absorbs carbon, improves air quality, improves water quality etc.*
- *Also how urban green space supports community identity, reduces crime & violence, suppose recreational opportunities for healthy lifestyles and mental health etc.*
- *And supporting economic benefits such as water management costs, benefits of trees, maintenance vs development infrastructure costs, property values, energy conservation costs etc.*

(also at evergreen.ca)

"Urban green space is good for Health & Community"

"Urban Green Space makes Ecological Sense"

"Urban Green space makes economic sense"