



Chair, Members of the CDC

July 12, 2010

Reference: PB 47/10 Proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments - "Back to Back" Townhouse and Townhouse Regulations

From: Kurt Koster, President, BurlingtonGreen,

In general, BurlingtonGreen has no issue with back-to-back townhouses and indeed there are some beneficial environmental considerations for encouraging them. With most units only having one wall exposed to the elements the result will be greater heating and cooling efficiencies (other building code requirements being the same).

We like the common area feature with a minimum 100 m² or 6 m² per unit, whichever is greater, which results in a greener community.

We have a concern over the fact that there is no limit on the maximum width of the lot (the minimum is 45 m). Does this mean we could have back-to-back townhouses that are 1000 m long? Getting to your back wall neighbor could mean as much as a 1km journey.

BurlingtonGreen has a concern that under the heading Environmental Matters (p4 and 47) the comment is "N/A". As mentioned above there is at least one positive result, others that come to mind are a higher density resulting in easier justification for transit (a positive environmental impact), less GHG's and cleaner air due to fewer cars. We are disappointed that Staff does not consider "Environment" worthy of some comments. ~~Perhaps a direction from council is needed.~~

Others can speak to Social impacts, which should also be addressed (Triple Bottom Line).

From P 4 of the report PB 47/10:

Communication Matters:

*In accordance with the Planning Act and the provisions of the Official Plan for general Official Plan and zoning by-law amendments, staff has provided notice of the **public meeting** through a newspaper advertisement in the Burlington Post as well as direct mailing to external agencies. To date, no comments have been received from agencies or the public.*

I was told by staff that the public meeting is the CDC meeting. BurlingtonGreen does not consider a City committee meeting an appropriate forum to engage the residents who may be impacted by the changes, the Shape Burlington report dwelled on this issue as well (see p14 their report: "The need for meaningful dialogue").

The CDC "public" meeting is the **minimum** requirement under the Planning Act. Were any attempts made to invite residents in neighbourhoods affected by this change? (See p7: "*The lands affected by the amendment are located in the Medium and High Density Residential and Mixed Use Corridor designations **throughout the City of Burlington***")

Language used is difficult to understand for a layperson. This is a concern about most staff reports related to planning issues. A glossary of terms or a link would be helpful in the future.

Examples: From p14 :*Back to Back Townhouse: **25 m² per unit**. As a component of this amenity area, each back to back townhouse development shall have a minimum of one common amenity area, with a*

minimum area of 100 m², or a total common amenity area of **6 m² per unit**, whichever is greater-----
 The 25 m² includes the 6m² for the common amenity area and some other areas such as the balcony.
 This table on p11 can be very confusing unless you understand the planner's definitions:

Lot Width	45 m
Lot Area	0.4 ha
Front Yard	7.5 m (a)
Rear Yard	9 m
Side Yard	4.5 m
Street Side Yard	6 m
Yard abutting R1, R2, R3 Zone	12 m
Density	50 units per hectare maximum
Floor Area Ratio	***
Amenity Area	25 m ² / unit (c)
Privacy Area	(d)

Front, rear and side yard are not what a townhouse or single family residence understand them to be.
 I do not understand how “Rear Yard” is defined for back-to-back townhouses, with streets on all sides.

The three points I would like to make are:

- I do not believe the public was sufficiently engaged before this report going to CDC. A public meeting should have been held and affected residents notified prior to the CDC meeting for a proper citizen engagement.
- An executive summary in the report should be phrased in layman's language for public use.
- A triple bottom line approach should be used for all city issues.

~~I hope BurlingtonGreen has made a small contribution to the democratic process.~~
Sincerely,

Kurt Koster
President
BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association