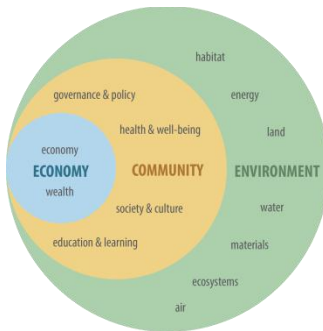


January 14, 2018

Executive Summary/Key Recommendation:

BurlingtonGreen respectfully recommends that Burlington City Council support a project that when built will serve as an exemplar of sustainable development and that, in addition to supporting Burlington’s Strategic Plan and its Blue Dot commitment, has the potential to gain national recognition as a smart community.

We believe that the Emshih Development proposal for this property addresses and synthesizes economic, employment, social and environmental priorities in a forward-thinking, attractive mixed-use community. The proposed development aligns with the vision of [BurlingtonGreen’s Community 20/20 initiative](#), which links landowners and developers to innovative green design features and forward focused building practices to create communities where residents can live, work and play while reducing their impact on the environment.



This approach is informed by [Future Oxford’s](#) sustainability framework, which nests economic activity within the context of the community’s and the environment’s needs, as depicted in this diagram. In this model, priority is given to development that safeguards the environment and the community’s quality of life, such that economic prosperity is attained, not at the expense of the environment and community, but by being a positive contributor to overall environmental and community health and well-being.

Naturally, the project’s commitment to being carbon neutral through green design, to supporting active transportation and to the inclusion of natural habitat elements are key reasons for BurlingtonGreen’s support; at the same time, however, we are mindful of the City’s economic and social development responsibilities, and are pleased that the developer has ensured the project yields equally significant social and economic benefits.

These benefits can be summarized as follows:

- Environmental:
 - Supports City’s strategic carbon reduction targets through net zero development
 - Supports City’s strategic vision for targeted intensification and mobility hubs/transportation corridors
 - Ameliorates traffic congestion issues/rush-hour gridlock that employment-only use would exacerbate
 - Contributes to City’s goals of walkability and active transportation: site is close enough to GO Station (1.2 km) to support active transportation for

- commuters, and close enough to lifestyle amenities (restaurants, mall) to encourage residents to use active or public transportation options
- Proposed enhancement of tree canopy contributes to community health and offsets carbon emissions from local traffic
- Economic:
 - Increased annual property taxes from \$179,859 to \$3.8M (2014)
 - \$24.4M in development charges
 - \$1.6M in building permit fees
- Employment:
 - 350+ permanent office and retail jobs
 - 2070 person/years of employment (construction and materials)
- Social:
 - Affordable housing through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity
 - Housing for seniors to respond to significant senior demographic
 - Vibrant, robust community that will complement, benefit from and offer benefit to existing surrounding businesses and services (hotel and conference centre, restaurants, retail premises)

BurlingtonGreen acknowledges that in order for the City of Burlington to consider approving the Emshih development proposal, the site would need to be re-designated as mixed-use lands, as it was previously zoned, and that to ensure alignment with the City's mobility hub/transportation corridor intensification strategy, the Burlington GO Mobility Hub boundary would need to be flexed to encapsulate the site within its boundary. We encourage the City to make these changes, and have provided more detailed contextual observations, points to support our rationale and a more detailed and quantified outline of benefits in the accompanying document.

In summary, BurlingtonGreen believes that as an example of what is possible, this development can serve as a valuable demonstration project – a bold gateway to the new Burlington – providing a living example of sustainable development that will confirm Burlington's environmental leadership among Canadian municipalities while sustaining its reputation as Canada's best mid-sized city. BurlingtonGreen urges City Council to take the necessary steps to allow this development project to move forward. We believe Burlington has everything to gain by this, and that the future success of the site will bear this out and serve as a model for sustainable development, done right, in the right location.

I. Background/Introduction

Together with the community, BurlingtonGreen's mission is to protect the environment, mitigate climate change and create a healthier, more environmentally responsible Burlington. We are a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization providing the largest presence of environment-related programming, services and impact in the City of Burlington with 10,000-15,000 citizens participating in our annual Community Clean Up event alone. All sectors of the community have come to rely on our organization to address their questions about the environment, advocate for a healthier, more sustainable city, and to provide engaging educational experiences and rewarding volunteer opportunities. We are guided by a solution-focused and results-oriented philosophy, which informs our work and is demonstrated through the positive impact BurlingtonGreen has had on the community and health of the environment over the last 10 years.

We have actively engaged in opportunities to contribute to the City's Strategic and Official Plans, providing constructive input in support of city planning and building that will contribute to Burlington's Blue Dot commitment and to its role as a partner in the recently-announced Centre for Climate Change Management.

We endorse and support the concept of smart intensification or "smart communities" as a valid strategy for accommodating growth in Burlington. The creation of mobility hubs around the three GO stations in the city is a sensible and desirable approach to make room for people to live close to important transportation links, thereby helping reduce Burlington's high dependence on individually owned and driven vehicles. Smart intensification will go a long way in reducing the City's overall greenhouse gas emissions, and help bring it closer to its commitment as a Blue Dot community – recognizing current and future generation rights to a healthy environment.

BurlingtonGreen has launched its [Community 20/20 initiative](#) specifically to link landowners and developers to innovative green design features and forward-focused building practices to create communities where residents can live, work and play while reducing their impact on the environment. BurlingtonGreen welcomes opportunities to work with any and all developers who aim to integrate sustainable design features and operational practices into their project. Our first opportunity for this type of collaboration has been with Emshih Developments, and we have been pleased to be able to provide input into their project design for 901 Guelph Line.

Within the context of Blue Dot, Burlington's own Strategic Plan and our Community 20/20 program, we wish to articulate our specific vision for the Burlington GO station mobility hub, and our enthusiastic support for a proposed groundbreaking, sustainably designed demonstration development centrally located in the City. Located at 901 Guelph Line, this 16 acre brownfield site is situated just south of the Guelph Line QEW interchange, (a key gateway to Burlington), making it a superb location to showcase innovative features that align beautifully with the City's guiding principles; a city that grows, a city that moves, a healthy and greener city, and an engaging city. Establishing this smart, net zero community as a bold gateway to the new Burlington in this profile location will realize an array of benefits as it leads by example, inspiring future developments elsewhere in the City and beyond.

II. Project Location/Design Concept

The property is located at 901 Guelph Line (east side), with its north boundary on Harvester Road, and is approximately 1200 metres from the Burlington GO Station on Fairview Street. The following visual representation illustrates the property location and a preliminary site design proposed by the developer, and serves as a reference and context for the comments provided. An aerial view of the existing site, and an earlier site plan showing the mixed use components are included as Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix.

Preliminary visualization of proposed project:



III. Contextual Discussion and Proposed Strategy

Zoning/Mobility Hub

The 901 Guelph Line property was previously zoned for mixed use development and is currently zoned for employment land use only. In order to create the proposed 'live, work, play, shop', smart community, the zoning would need to return to its former mixed use status. And herein lies the challenge, as the site is located just outside the boundary of the currently delineated Burlington mobility hub radii. (Please refer to Figure 3 in the Appendix.)

However, if we compare the present configuration of the Burlington hub with its sister hubs at the Aldershot and Appleby GO Stations (Figures 4 and 5 in the Appendix), we can see that in fact the east-west radii of these hubs are about 1.25 km from their respective GO Stations, whereas the east radius of the Burlington hub is under one km from the station. Extending the perimeter east to encompass 901 Guelph Line would balance the perimeter of the hub more accurately, placing the proposed smart community about 1.2 km from the station, while simultaneously providing the opportunity to introduce greater residential, commercial and employment capacity into the hub mix.

Concerns that have been expressed about approval of this land conversion to mixed use, compromising the identified Guelph Line hub boundary, can be overcome. For example, shifting the boundary to the nearby creek as a natural eastern boundary is an option, or alternatively, the South Service Road/Laurentian Drive north-south roads, which would leave only a very small portion of the eastern boundary aligned with the creek.

Zoning/Employment Use Targets

Other concerns that the land is proximate to industrial-use lands and that it is needed for employment development could be viewed through a broader lens: without knowing what another, employment-only development might produce in the way of jobs, it is difficult to be confident that this type of use would actually generate more or better jobs than the proposed project (which is estimated to produce 350+ permanent office and retail positions). The lack of interest to date in developing this land for industrial use may also point to a shift in the type of employment that might best serve Burlington's economic priorities. With knowledge and service based industries outstripping manufacturing/production based industries in the new economy, affording opportunities for this kind of employment growth would support the City's strategic plan for employment as, or perhaps more effectively, than other types of employment could. An informal scan of businesses along the Harvester corridor between Guelph Line and Walkers Line indicates that hospitality, service, retail and professional businesses predominate. Close by, such hospitality businesses as the Holiday Inn, The Keg, Tucker's Marketplace, and Sotiris, would benefit from proximity to a mixed residential/office/retail property and contribute to amenities accessible to the site's residents and employees – a win-win.

And since this site was previously zoned for mixed use, the simple expedient of **reverting to the original zoning**, within the context of the Strategic Plan and the

mobility hub component of it, would remove the existing contextual barriers to going forward with the development as proposed by Emshih Development Inc. The proximity of this land parcel to the GO Station, key east-west and north-south arteries and the QEW/403, the Burlington Mall and nearby retail outlets including Wal-Mart, amenities such as multiple restaurants and a hotel/conference centre, place it in an ideal location for intensive residential and additional commercial/retail occupancy. Zoning approval need not be viewed as the City making exceptions based on the priorities of the developer (admittedly not a desirable precedent), but rather, as the City taking charge of its own Official Plan, which has not yet been finalized, in order to meet its publicly stated strategic objectives for sustainable development.

Location-Appropriate Intensification

As well, intensification in this location may well be more acceptable to Burlington residents, many of whom voiced strong opposition to this type of development in the downtown core, whereas this project and its location would be well grounded in the City's vision for "intensification in the right place" and aligned with the plans for Plains/Fairview Corridor and Burlington GO Mobility Hub.

Traffic Patterns

Traffic studies have shown that the current intersection is at peak hour capacity. MTO has a redesign that has been ready to go for three years but not acted upon due to lack of interest by the Region and the City. With the redesign, the intersection could only support a small office building which would not be financially viable to a developer. The Emshih plan supports the maximum office use and utilizes the off peak traffic capacity with retail and residential components. This makes the development more economically viable. Furthermore, traffic studies for the proposed development suggest that an employment-only site would greatly exacerbate traffic gridlock around the Guelph Line/Harvester Road/QEW location at peak periods, since this intersection is already at peak capacity now, whereas a mixed use development would avoid this undesirable level of traffic congestion. In fact, insufficient intersection traffic capacity is one of the main factors in this parcel of land remaining undeveloped since being rezoned a decade ago from mixed use to employment use as part of a mid-town office use corridor concept that quite simply, has not come to fruition. The result is a lamentable under-utilization of a highly desirable location which could have exciting and dynamic potential with the proposed design.

Comparison to West 5, London

Concern has been raised that intensification in Burlington cannot be done outside mobility hubs. Net zero developments by their very nature are examples of intensification. West 5 in London (see Figure 6 in the Appendix) has no single family homes and is located 7 km from the downtown centre with public transit facilities. It is also 9 km from the closest freeway to the south. It, however, has the critical mass to make it sustainable with sufficient people and jobs. The Emshih property is 1.2 km from the GO Station, a stone's throw from the QEW, and close to many amenities (see next section) – the critical mass is already there. If West 5 can succeed so far

away from “the centre of things”, then by comparison, the Emshih project has virtually ideal conditions for success in the proposed location.

Moving Forward

Advancing an opportunity to bolster the Strategic Plan and demonstrate Burlington’s leadership in supporting cutting edge sustainable development is a persuasive argument for returning the property zoning to mixed use. We argue the need for consideration of unique exceptions that provide significant added value to achieve both the City’s strategic priorities and ‘triple A’ interests.

As demands to intensify rise, it is essential Burlington act now to collaborate with developers who are poised to establish smart communities, so that the citizens of Burlington can see first-hand that urban intensification need not be scary, can be bold and beautiful and more beneficial to the health of the environment.

The willingness of a forward-thinking developer in possession of the property to invest in a sustainable net-zero project is fortuitous indeed when viewed through the lens of the Strategic Plan. Not only would Emshih’s proposed development avoid added traffic congestion, but it would provide much-needed housing, including affordable housing, along with commercial opportunities and employment, while encouraging citizens and businesses to contribute to a greener, healthier Burlington.

IV. Benefits of Proposed Project

The following table provides a comparison between the permitted use of the property currently and the proposed Emshih mixed use net zero project. Some data are preliminary estimates (as noted by “est.”).

Comparator	Current Permitted	Proposed
Office Space	86,000 s.f.*	86,000 s.f.*
Retail Space	0	74,000 s.f.
Res. Units market 75%	0	720
Res. Units affordable 25%	0	240
Residents	0	1152
Construction jobs	176 person years	2070 person years
Employment jobs	245	382
Annual Taxes	\$330,900	\$3,826,200
Dev. Charges	\$1,217,700	\$24,361,900
Planning Fees	\$45,000	\$455,100
Building Permit Fees	\$120,000	\$1,600,000
People plus Jobs/ha	38	185
Annual Retail Spending	0	\$42,200.000
Tree Canopy est.	0% required	25%
Placemaking Areas est.	0	2 ha.
Net Zero Construction est.	0	1,000,000 s.f.
Carbon Production est.	370 Tonnes/yr.	0
Parking Spaces est.	319	700
Transit Utilization est.	2%	45%
Vehicle Emissions est.	500 tonnes/yr.	20 tonnes/yr.

* Traffic Impact Study, MMM Group, Feb. 2014

V. Conclusion

As an example of what is possible, this development can serve as a valuable demonstration project, providing a living example of sustainable development that will confirm Burlington's leadership among Canadian municipalities. BurlingtonGreen urges City Council to take the necessary steps to allow this development project to move forward. We believe Burlington has everything to gain by this, and that the future success of the site will bear this out and serve as a model for sustainable development, done right.

Respectfully,

BurlingtonGreen Advocacy Team

APPENDIX

Figure 1: Aerial View, from north.



Figure 2: Preliminary Site Plan

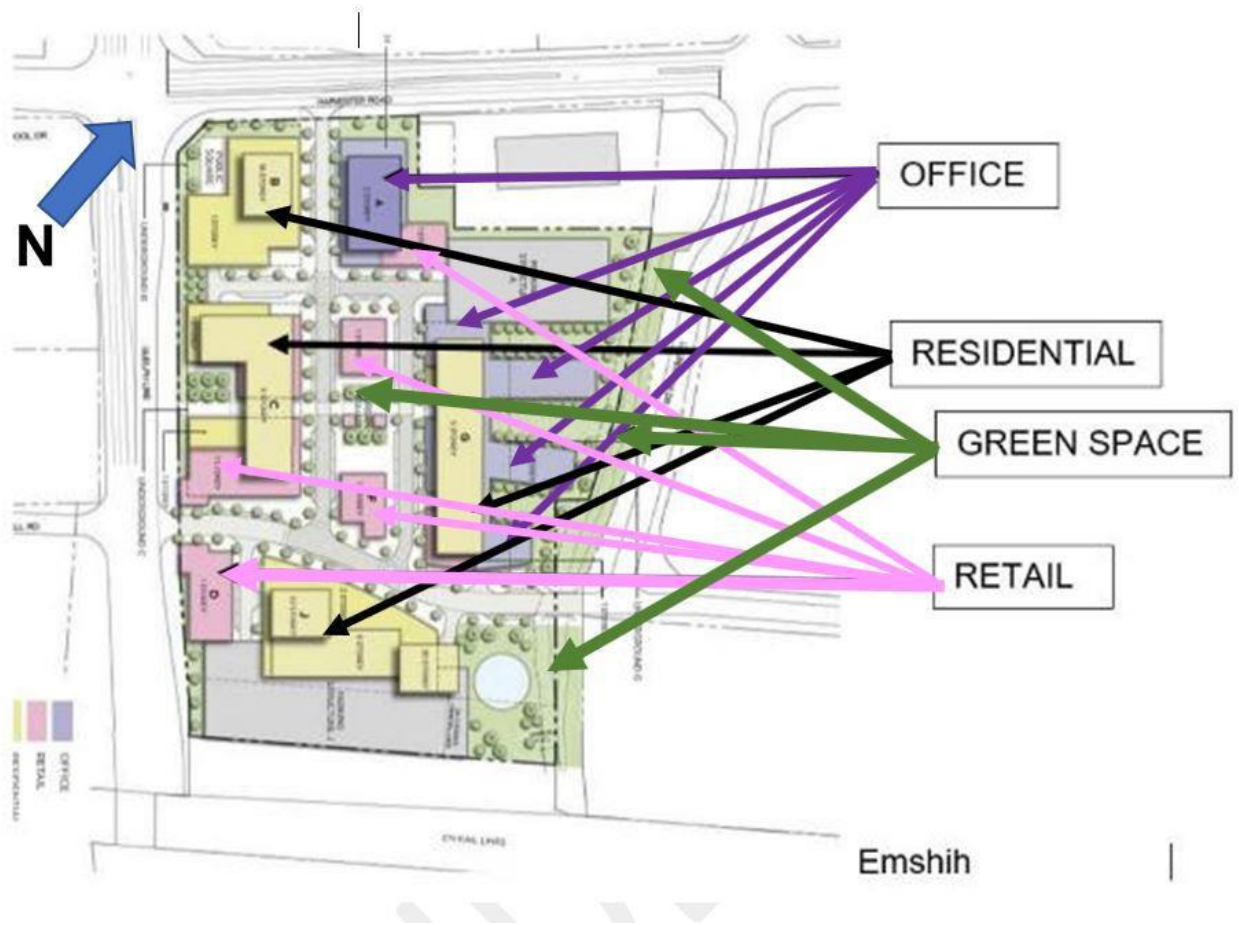
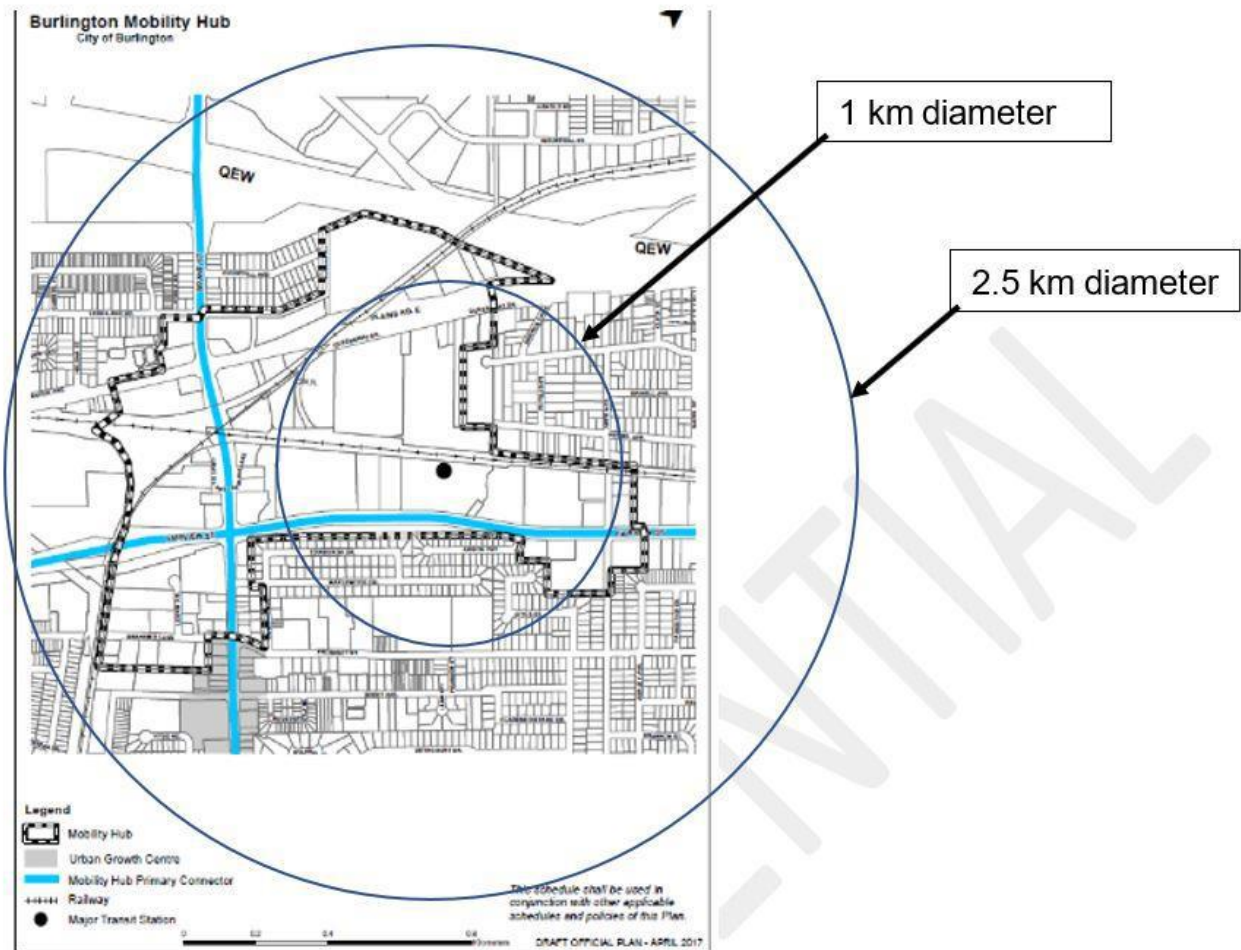


Figure 3 Burlington Mobility Hub



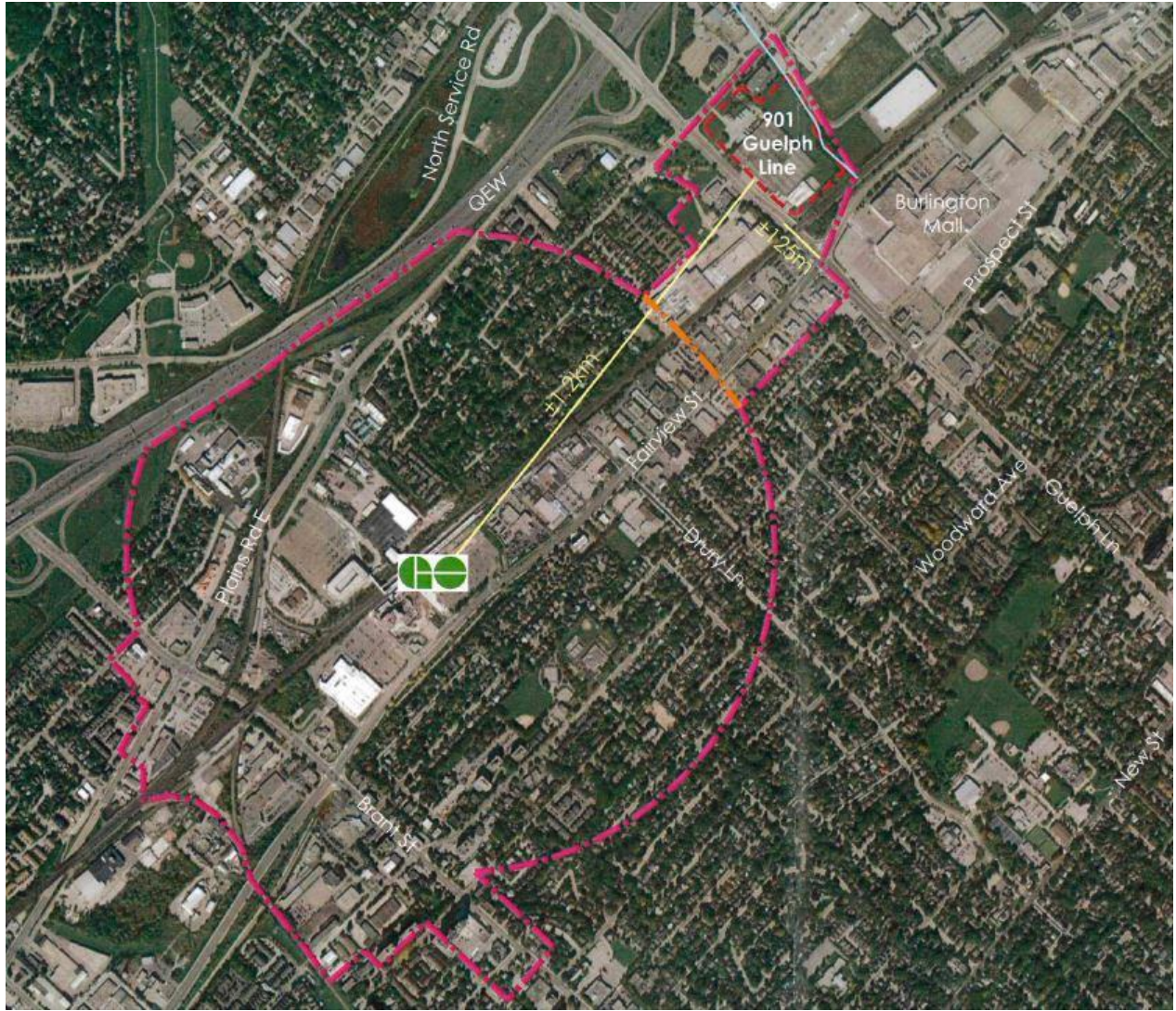


Figure 4: Appleby Mobility Hub

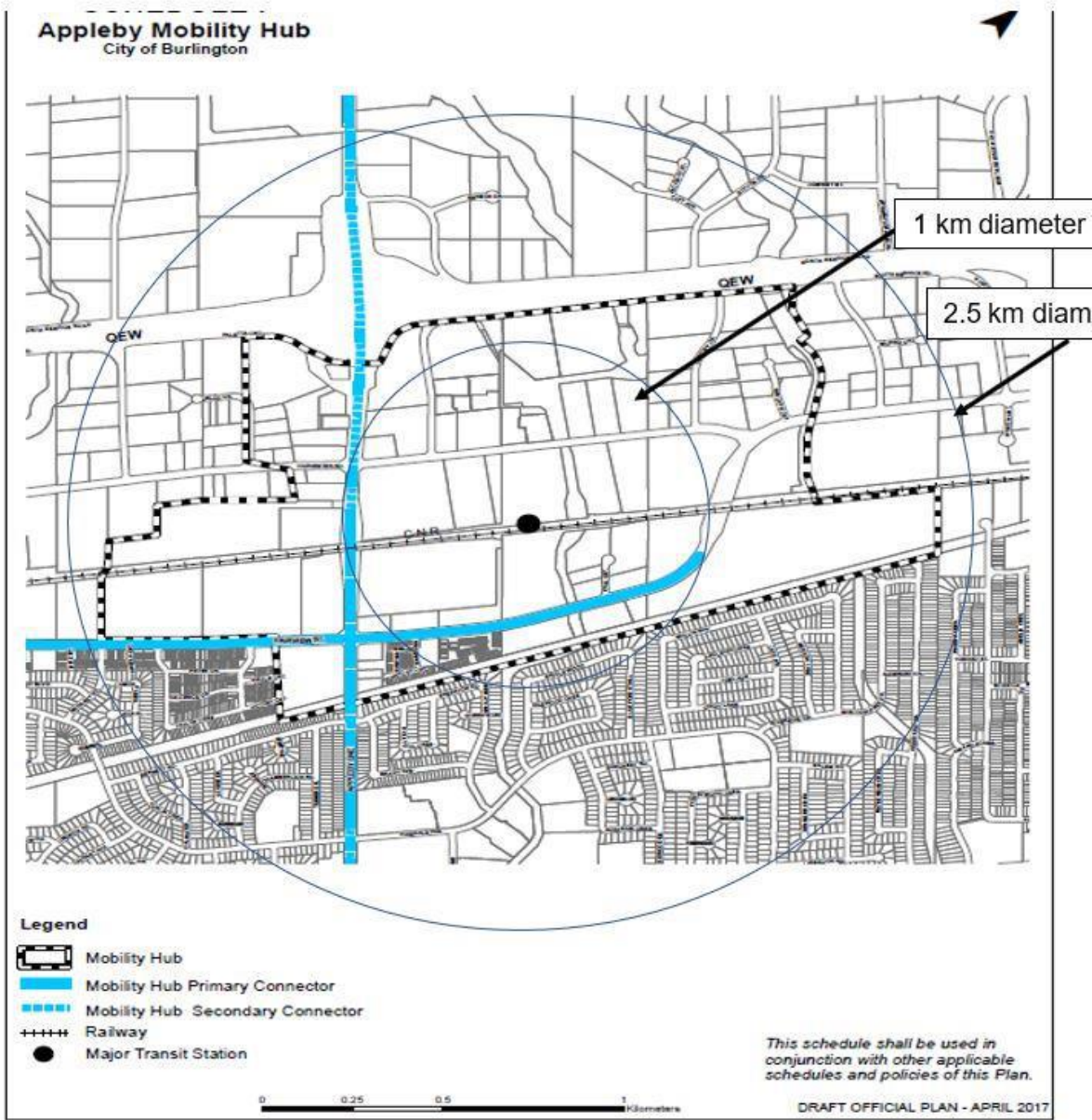


Figure 5: Aldershot Mobility Hub

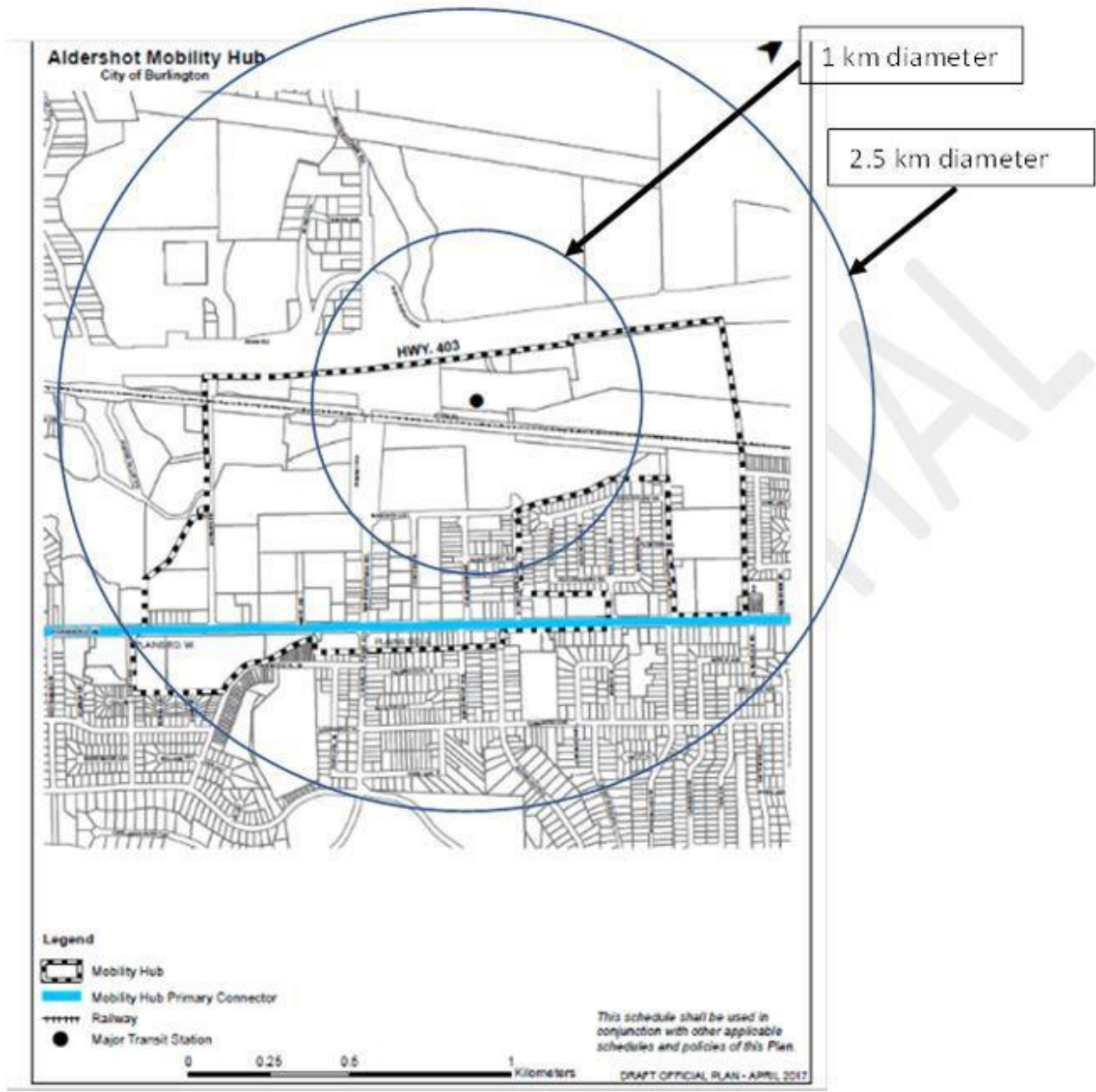


Figure 6: West 5 Development, London Ontario



See video by S2e at : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDGgCiiubY&feature=youtu.be>