

Mayor Jackson, Members of Council

July 9, 2009

I have studied the “URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE OLD LAKESHORE ROAD PRECINCT” and found them wanting. As we look to intensify, to meet the Places to Grow act, BurlingtonGreen believes we should not follow the approach of highrises to attain the requirements. If you look at thriving, higher density communities, they generally incorporate little in the way of highrises. Instead what works, is buildings to a max of 5 stories, often mixed use, with commercial in the bottom floor. Architect Jack Diamond stated that Vienna with a citywide floor area ratio between 2:1 to 3:1 fits a population of 1.6 million into a space roughly 8% of the size of Toronto. High densities can be attained with lower rise buildings.

I hope you had a chance to read the attached article: Faulty Towers

Some facts garnered from that article:

Economic considerations

1. Comparing the cost of three-storey homes with three families to a highrise, both had the same density of 125 units per hectare. Construction costs were nearly double in highrises and maintenance costs were up to 50 % more.
2. Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reported in “Using Building Form and Design,” that highrises cost more to build per square metre.
3. Few tall buildings last more than 40 or 50 years, while smaller walkups often remain in service for centuries.

Social and health considerations

1. The higher the building the higher the crime rate.
2. Juvenile crime rate highest in the tallest buildings
3. Children in highrises tend to have fewer friends
4. Children living in highrises tend to have poorly developed social and motor skills
5. Sidewalk life is weakened by highrises.
6. In a study done in the UK it was found that families in highrises had 57% more neuroses than those in single family homes. The higher the floor the more the neuroses.

Environment

1. More energy per resident than any other form including single family
2. Two and a half times more GHG's than townhouses.
3. More car use in high rise than townhouses or single family.

Of the two options one is the least damaging with the proviso that building height be no more than 5 stories. If this means changing the zoning, so be it. Developers get zoning changes passed, why not the citizens.

Thank you for your attention. Kurt Koster, President, BurlingtonGreen

