

August 4, 2023
Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and Council
Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
1593 Four Mile Creek Road
PO Box 100
Virgil, Ontario
Re: Strategic Plan and Planning

Dear Lord Mayor and members of Council,

The concept of a '**Vibrant and Complete Community**' is seen as an important goal in the Town's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Strangely, planning staff and council refuse to recognize that dropping a large commercial hotel into the middle of an established residential neighbourhood will have a massively negative effect on this goal.

Staff did not require a market /impact study to be submitted as per Official Plan section 10.4 Commercial Policies. At the July 25th Council Meeting, council rejected all recommendations received from the Urban Design Committee, including all of number three (3) where b, c, and d responded directly to the requested comments from staff regarding height, massing and scale of the building. Land use is an important part of urban design. It is not outside the purview of urban design. Planning staff did not ask the Urban Design Committee to comment on this, but the UDC dared to offer an opinion on this important issue. If you can only answer the questions you have been asked, and add nothing more, all of the power is in the hands of the questioner.

The open space that enthralls everyone is not accessible to the public and will not even be visible to passersby through the brick and stone wall. As the entire site is proposed to be rezoned to General Commercial, there is no guarantee that the green space will remain or even ever be planted. Walls do not contribute to a sense of community. Nor do they in any way promote '*inclusion, diversity and equity*' but instead inspire '*exclusion, homogeneity and inequity*'.

At the same time, the town is wondering what to do with the formal hospital site. Hmmm, let's think outside the box for a minute. Royal Oak Community School is currently occupying the building. The former hospital is adjacent to the Queen Picton Commercial area. The Shaw Festival theatre is to the south, to the southwest is the Shaw Club Hotel and Zee's Restaurant, St. Vincent De Paul Church to the west, to the north is the Niagara Long Term Care Residence and Queen's Landing Hotel. To the east is the Fort George parking lot. Sounds like a much better location for a hotel than the Parliament Oak School site. It could become an anchor to the commercial district, with weddings in the church, overflow parking possible in the existing parking lot of Fort George, and the existing roads are already adequately sized. This much more prominent and visible location for a Grand Hotel would contribute liveliness to the east end of the existing commercial district.

The Royal Oak Community School could occupy some or all of the existing Parliament Oak building. The Parliament Oak School is surrounded by houses, some of which have children who could walk to school. Perhaps a community hub and arts organizations could also inhabit the school. This would create a '**Vibrant and Complete Community**' for the residents within the existing residential area - not the walled black hole that would be created by the exclusionary hotel proposed for this site.

The former hospital site may be smaller in size but it is a much more prominent and appropriate location for a hotel of the grandeur proposed on the Parliament Oak site.

'Vibrant and Complete Communities' require institutional lands and community services located in appropriate locations. **'Vibrant and Complete Communities'** will not be created by happenstance nor by the whims of developers. They need to be contemplated, orchestrated and envisioned with competent planning and design.

Connie Tintinalli
Niagara-on-the-Lake