

Town Council is now against building a transit transfer terminal on Broadway



After significant debate and opposition from downtown Orangeville businesses, Town Council is now against building a transit transfer terminal on Broadway.

A motion to reconsider its April decision, placing the transfer station on Broadway, was passed and the April motion was later defeated 4-3 at this past Monday night's Council meeting.

Subsequently, a Notice of Motion was put forward by Coun. Andy MacIntosh, requesting Town staff put together a report to Council for January 2021, with updated costs to locate a transit transfer station in front of the Edelbrock Centre on Centre Street.

The staff report will also include information on adding a second community garden within Orangeville, since the transit transfer terminal will impact its seasonal operations.

?Our downtown businesses and property owners have roundly come out against this decision that Council previously made, I think we have to listen to the BIA, we have to listen to our downtown businesses,? said Mayor Sandi Brown to Council.

Troy Brett, owner of Mochaberry Coffee (177 Broadway), noted that the nearly 300 members of the Orangeville BIA support the concerns of Broadway businesses regarding the transit transfer terminal being located downtown.

?The impact of the transfer station to the general atmosphere of the Heritage Downtown is very important to us. It could possibly be very off putting to tourists,? said Brett.

?We're selling authentic Heritage Downtown and the transit hub does not fit with this brand. We feel this is not a good economic development strategy.?

Brett added that a Broadway location doesn't coincide with the Town's tourism study that's currently being conducted.

?You've heard from us at previous Council meetings and I just want it to be very clear, the downtown transit hub is not supported by downtown businesses,? he charged.

?The BIA in the Town has spent millions of dollars over the years for parking and taking away 16 spots for the transit hub just doesn't make any sense in that regard.?

Parking and easy access to small businesses is especially important right now as Dufferin-Wellington-Guelph grapples with the potential of future COVID-19 restrictions, while case numbers rise, Brett noted.

“As we're all very aware, the pandemic is hitting small business all around Ontario extremely hard. The businesses in downtown Orangeville are no different, we're getting hit with this as well,” he said.

“We're all pivoting our businesses to take out, online, curbside pickup, which really counts on having the roadside access for this to work. Please consider these things and how taking away something like roadside parking can negatively impact the downtown businesses.”

Frank Gray, who owns rental property along Broadway, says he understands the importance of parking firsthand, as he's had to provide quite a bit of it to his tenants over the years.

“The BIA, has been solidly against the location of the proposed bus terminal in the downtown core for many, many reasons, such as safety, noise, fumes, lack of parking, plus the added confusion because of four buses coming and going,” he remarked.

Gray said there's enthusiasm for the Edelbrock property and grants from higher levels of government to move the project forward.

“The location of the bus terminal is a very important decision to make for the longterm planning of the Town of Orangeville and especially the transit system, As the Town continues to grow, this is a great location, centrally located at the Edelbrock Centre land,” he noted.

Ahsalyn Wilson and Michelle Thompson spoke on behalf of Orangeville Memorials (214 Broadway) at Council on Monday,

voicing their opposition to the Broadway transit transfer point location.

Orangeville Memorials, which has been in the community for over 125 years, serves a majority of seniors with mobility issues or individuals from outside of Town who need convenient

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Orangeville Memorials, which has been in the community for over 125 years, serves a majority of seniors with mobility issues or individuals from outside of Town who need convenient parking.

Proponents of the downtown location, such as Coun. Grant Peters, pointed to the completion of a safety study analyzing the Broadway location for the transit hub, released on Monday, which found relocating it to the south side of the street would eliminate jaywalking concerns.

Council made the decision to move forward with the downtown terminal based on several factors, one of those was the completion of the safety study, the findings of the safety study are fairly conclusive, in that, where there are minor concerns there are solutions and that, in general there are no major concerns, said Coun. Peters.

He noted that parking has been a major issue cited by the BIA, but the 82-90 Broadway Project will increase parking for the downtown as a whole.

Coun. Todd Taylor, who also supports the Broadway location, said he went into municipal politics because he thought he could make a difference by thinking through projects and respecting Orangeville taxpayers.

He noted that numerous consultants have been hired for this project and they believe downtown is the most suitable location for the Town.

?Why use them if we're not going to utilize the information that they give us?? he said.

Meanwhile, Coun. Lisa Post stands with Coun. Taylor and Peters in supporting a transit transfer point on Broadway.

?In my opinion, it is a blatant disregard of taxpayer money to ignore recommendations from the experts [consultants] just because they didn't give us the answers that we wanted,? Post noted.

She said Council is now down over \$50,000 of taxpayer dollars, invested in reports, that are being disregarded by a majority of councillors.

?We're in a financially difficult time right now with COVID, our residents are suffering with financial burdens and our consultants that were funded with taxpayer dollars deemed that the best location [Broadway] is also the most inexpensive option and that often doesn't happen,? she explained.

Meanwhile Coun. Joe Andrews says one of his many concerns with the proposed location on Broadway is a build-up of traffic that could be problematic.

Council will revisit the issue in January of next year when Town staff create a report analyzing the Edelbrock Centre location.