

Walton Development Story Finds Its Legs

Posted on [March 28, 2013](#) by [Ken Gray](#)

So any proposal by Walton International to build outside the urban boundary would be viciously voted down on Tuesday by [planning](#) committee we were told by many.

Except it didn't happen.

You had to wonder how long it would take to sink in to our city council that the 3,200-acre Walton proposal was worth hundreds of millions of dollars and would create a city the size of [Kanata](#) in southwest Ottawa. Sooner or later money talks.

Our city officials might not know a film studio from a latrine but they know a buck when they see one. So [councillors](#) called for more information from staff in response to a Walton [report](#) that called into question staff's figures for expansion of [development](#) land.

"If these numbers aren't accurate and we're short of supply, then we have a serious problem and we have to deal with it," said Coun. Allan Hubley in a [story published by the Ottawa Business Journal](#). "We cannot attract businesses to the city if we do not have available land for them to use."

Councillor Rainer Bloss, formerly a big doubter of the Walton project, said he had questions on the figures put forth by [city staff](#) in the report.

Previous to Tuesday, city officials were adamant that the urban boundary should stand firm. Now ... well ... they're not so sure.

They plan to vote on this in April at planning committee. It will be interesting to see how it turns out. Maybe this story has legs after all, having been thoroughly dismissed by some previously.

8 Responses to *Walton Development Story Finds Its Legs*

1. *Ken Gray* says:

[March 30, 2013 at 11:51 AM](#)

@JeffB

That's a very good comment, Jeff. At present, only one side of the discussion is getting its way.

cheers

kgray

2. *JeffB* says:

[March 30, 2013 at 11:37 AM](#)

@ Ken – I agree that there are more nuances, but sometimes those nuances aren't even brought into play. And yes, most people will say they are in favour of intensification – until it impacts them. At that point, they start having some doubts. If they get the impression the impact will be negative then they dig in their heels rather than try to have a dialogue. Not wanting change is part of human nature, but sometimes it takes on a life of its own.

I'm not trying to argue that the city is doing everything right. But when no matter what you try to do it seems that there is opposition, you either feel like you should give up or just push on

through. If there was more give and take from all sides (and I would include the developer side in this as they do need to be a major part of the mediation needed), then maybe we could get towards something everyone will be happy with.

3. *Ken Gray* says:

[March 29, 2013 at 11:09 AM](#)

@SouthMarch

There's usually a deal involved. The developer bids high and the city compromises ... usually on height.

cheers and thx for the comment

kgray

4. *@SouthMarch* says:

[March 29, 2013 at 11:06 AM](#)

When has council denied a developer flat out – even with bylaws, provincial laws, resident opposition and OMB conditions on the city's side?

5. *David* says:

[March 28, 2013 at 4:04 PM](#)

Yet again, you're making a mountain out of a molehill.

The specific area of concern was that of employment land.

It's not surprising there is confusion on the issue. The developers themselves can't agree on it. We have Walton and some others with land beyond the urban boundary, obviously not disinterested, saying we need more, yet other developers with land in the city – maybe even the same ones – routinely argue we have too much and demand that they be allowed to rezone it and develop it as residential.

The councillors are quite correct to send it back for further analysis.

Moreover, even if the determination comes back that more land is needed for employment uses, that's a far cry from any of Walton's land being added to the urban boundary. Their land is still prime farmland and is still in the wrong place – especially if serving it directly with rapid transit is important.

6. *Ken Gray* says:

[March 28, 2013 at 9:32 AM](#)

@JeffB

With respect, the argument might be a bit more nuanced than that.

I spoke to a FCA meeting of about 45 people and only two were against intensification. What bothered them was how it was being handled.

Furthermore, if you go to Kanata you'll see huge sprawl out there and intensification in central areas. So all the talk of smart growth is just talk, not action.

Cheers and thx for the comment

kgray

7. *JeffB* says:

[March 28, 2013 at 9:28 AM](#)

I don't want to hear people complain about continuing urban sprawl, then object to any and all actual attempts at intensification because they feel it will wreck their neighbourhood.

The thing is James, no matter what the city does there will be someone who is unhappy.

8. *James O'Grady* says:

[March 28, 2013 at 7:35 AM](#)

They always 'deny' until they 'approve'. Then it's too late for anyone to do anything. If this passes, I don't want to hear another word out of City Hall about intensification. You simply can't talk out both sides of your mouth and expect anyone to believe what you're saying...

9.