



REPORT

REPORT TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

REPORT FROM: Melissa Ricci, Senior Planner

DATE: April 26, 2021

REPORT NO.: PD-2021-0015

RE: Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment 48

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report PD-2021-0015, Regional Official Plan Review – Draft Scoped Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 48 (ROPA 48), dated April 22, 2021, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT prior to the adoption of ROPA 48 by Regional Council, the Region be requested to address the outstanding comments contained in Report PD-2021-0015 regarding:

- i) the proposed minimum density targets and population/employment ratios for the Georgetown and Acton Major Transit Station Areas;
- ii) ensuring that growth expectations for Local Nodes is reflective of the studies undertaken by the Town;
- iii) ensuring that the policy direction for Local Nodes can be implemented through Local Official Plan policies without the requirement for the preparation of Area Specific Plans (e.g. Secondary Plans); and,
- iv) the detailed policies that need to be satisfied regarding employment conversions;

AND FURTHER THAT this report be submitted to Halton Region as the Town's comments during the statutory public process for ROPA 48 which is being prepared as part of the broader Regional Official Plan Review Process;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Local Municipalities of Burlington, Milton and Oakville, Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation and the Grand River Conservation Authority.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this report is to highlight the key components of Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 48 (ROPA 48) — An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure, which is being introduced as part of the Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR), and to present Town staff comments. A key element of the Regional Official Plan Review is the Integrated Growth Management Strategy which examines options on how to address growth requirements as per the *Growth Plan (2020)* in Strategic Growth Areas, Employment Areas, and Settlement Areas. As per Report PD-2020-0035, a Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper was prepared by the Region identifying key population and employment growth areas, highlighting potential greenfield expansion areas and listing employment conversions being considered as part of the ROPR process. ROPA 48, attached to this report as Appendix A, has been introduced to implement components of the Regional Urban Structure, establish a hierarchy of strategic growth areas in the Regional Official Plan and to address local municipal planning priorities related to the urban structure in advance of the next phase of the ROPR process.

At its meeting on February 23, 2021, Regional Council was presented with the draft ROPA 48 through Report LPS17-21. The draft ROPA includes the following planning matters: Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas (including boundaries and density targets), Strategic Growth Areas and limited Employment Land Conversions of those properties identified by local municipalities as having strategic importance in advancing elements of the local urban structure. At the meeting, Regional Council amended the report requesting the inclusion of the following recommendations:

- To direct staff to include the southern portion of the Agerton Secondary Plan (lands south of hydro corridor) to facilitate the Major Transit Station Area and the southerly Milton Education Village employment land conversions as part of the draft ROPA.
- To request regional staff to consider a policy to permit adjusting population and employment ratios in growth nodes outside of Municipal Comprehensive Reviews to provide flexibility and responsiveness to changes in the market around the nature of employment and the success of mixed-use nodes.
- To request regional staff to consider local input in defining growth node policies and that regional staff comment on how growth nodes contribute to higher density employment and how this is factored into the land needs for employment forecasts.

In accordance with the statutory public process required by Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, ROPA 48 has been released for public consultation. A Public Open House and a Statutory Public Meeting are also required as part of the process and are anticipated to take place in late May/early-June.

COMMENTS:

Town staff are generally supportive of the broad purpose and intent of ROPA 48. Town staff have previously reviewed draft ROPA 48 and detailed comments were provided to Regional staff through the Halton Area Planning Partnership (HAPP) consultation process on January 26, 2021. Below is a description of the key components of ROPA 48 and relevant Town staff comments that were provided for consideration by the Region.

Planning Targets:

Amendment 1 to the *Growth Plan* introduced population and employment forecasts for Halton Region. ROPA 48 proposes to update the Regional Official Plan to include the 2051 population and employment forecasts for Halton Region contained within the *Growth Plan (2020)*. However, the distribution of growth and jobs to the Local Municipalities would be determined through the next phases of the Regional Official Plan Review process.

- Table 1, attached as Appendix B to this report, would be updated to include the 2051 Regional population and employment forecasts for Halton Region.
- Table 2B, attached as Appendix C to this report, would be added to the Regional Official Plan to include minimum density targets of jobs and residents for certain Strategic Growth Areas. Table 2B would also include minimum job targets for certain Strategic Growth Areas in proportion to the number of residents that the areas are planned to accommodate. These minimum targets are to be achieved beyond the 2051 planning horizon of this Plan. Table 2B includes minimum density and resident/job ratios for the Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) located in Georgetown and Acton. The Georgetown density has been established at 100 residents and jobs per hectare and an 80% residents/ 20% jobs ratio, while in Acton, the minimum density has been established at 70 residents and jobs per hectare and 70% residents/ 30% jobs ratio.

Town Staff Comments:

The inclusion of the 2051 population and employment forecasts into the Regional Official Plan is required in order to conform to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. As previously noted, the distribution of the growth to the local municipalities will be determined through subsequent phases of the Regional Official Plan review and be incorporated through a Regional Official Plan Amendment that implements the Preferred Growth Concept once selected by Regional Council.

To complete the review of the proposed MTSA minimum density targets and resident/job ratio and prior to the adoption of ROPA 48 by Regional Council, further discussion with Regional staff will be necessary on how the recommended targets for the Acton and Georgetown MTSAs have been determined. This is particularly important as the minimum targets and resident/jobs ratio will have to be incorporated into the Halton Hills Official Plan and pertinent Secondary Plans and be considered at the development review stage. Currently, the densities for both MTSAs are relatively low

and staff would like to understand how local planning work such as the Intensification Opportunities Study Update and the Employment Land Needs Assessment has been considering in establishing these densities. Further discussion regarding MTSA is provided in an ensuing section of this report.

Urban Growth Centres (UGC):

Urban Growth Centres (UGC) are existing or emerging downtown areas identified in the *Growth Plan (2020)*. UGCs are intended to accommodate a large proportion of population and employment growth. There are currently three Urban Growth Centres identified in the Region of Halton: Burlington GO MTSA/UGC, Midtown Oakville GO MTSA/UGC, Milton GO MTSA/UGC. Changes propose include:

- Adjustments to Urban Growth Centre boundaries.
- Minor policy changes to achieve conformity with the Provincial *Growth Plan*.

Town staff have not provided comments regarding UGC policies since there are no UGCs in Halton Hills.

Major Transit Station Areas:

Major Transit Station Areas are defined in the Growth Plan as areas within an approximate 500 to 800-metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10 minute walk. Major Transit Station Areas are to be planned to accommodate growth including a diverse mix of uses such as additional residential and affordable housing. The Province directs Upper and Single-tier municipalities to delineate MTSA boundaries and identify minimum density targets. The Town has two Major Station areas identified around the Acton GO Station and the Georgetown GO Station (maps of the Georgetown and Acton MTSA boundaries have been attached as Appendix D) ROPA 48 introduces the following changes to the Regional Official Plan:

- Boundary delineation and density targets for all Major Transit Station Areas.
- Policy changes to ensure conformity with the *Growth Plan* and provide direction for Local Municipalities to implement Area Specific Plans for Major Transit Station Areas.
- Removal of the Downtown Burlington Major Transit Station Area designation from the Regional Official Plan.
- Recommended interim policies for proposed Major Transit Station Areas (including the proposed Trafalgar GO Major Transit Station Area in Milton).

Town Staff Comments:

- Town staff worked with the Regional staff to identify the proposed MTSA boundaries, which are generally in keeping with those identified through the

Town's Employment Land Needs Assessment. The proposed Boundaries for Acton and Georgetown can be found in Appendix D to this report.

- As previously stated, Town staff require clarification on how the minimum densities and resident/ job ratio have been determined for the Acton and Georgetown MTSA's.

Growth Nodes

ROPA 48 will update the Regional Official Plan by identifying and recognizing Regional Nodes, or regionally-significant strategic growth areas. Local municipalities are required to prepare Area Specific Plans (e.g. Secondary Plans) or detailed Official Plan policies for Regional Nodes.

The following areas indicated on the Regional Urban Structure map have been identified for accommodation of growth, concentration of public services and high-density uses at a scale appropriate for their context.

Primary Nodes:

- Uptown Core, Oakville
- Hospital District, Oakville
- Milton Education Village, Milton
- Palermo Village, Oakville
- Uptown Urban Centre, Burlington

The following historic downtown areas or villages or areas have been identified for growth through mixed-use intensification at a scale appropriate for their context:

Secondary Nodes:

- Neyagawa Urban Core, Oakville
- Kerr Village, Oakville
- Bronte Village, Oakville
- Downtown Oakville
- Downtown Urban Centre, Burlington
- Downtown Georgetown, Halton Hills
- Guelph Street Corridor, Halton Hills

In addition, as part of Strategic Growth Areas, ROPA 48 includes policy references to Local Nodes which are recognized in local Official Plans and have a concentration of residential and employment uses with development densities and patterns supportive of pedestrian traffic and public transit.

Town Staff Comments:

- Town staff seeks clarity as to which Local Nodes within the Town of Halton Hills are currently considered/included in the Regional Strategic Growth Areas and the expectations for these nodes to accommodate Regional growth. In Halton Hills, Local Nodes which are not included in the ROPA as either Secondary Regional Nodes or within the MTSA Areas, would include the broader Civic Centre District in Georgetown, which is subject to two Council approved Comprehensive Development Plans (CDP) and existing planning approvals, and the Queen Street Corridor in Acton, which was recently identified as an Intensification Area in the Intensification Opportunities Study Update.
- If Local Nodes are to be considered for accommodating expected Regional growth, the ROPA must include provisions to ensure that each Local Node's capacity for accommodating growth is assessed based on the local context. Further to the above comments, Town Staff require confirmation of the messaging provided by Regional staff at the January 21, 2021 Halton Area Planning Partnership (HAPP) meeting wherein it was explained that local nodes and corridors identified through the Scoped ROPA will not require the completion of an Area Specific Plan as is currently required per Section 48 of the Regional Official Plan. Staff recommend that Section 48 be modified to align with other sections of the Regional Official Plan that provide flexibility to Local Municipalities to develop detailed Official Plan policies for Strategic Growth Areas in lieu of Secondary Plans.

Employment Area Conversions:

A limited amount of Employment Area conversions that meet the criteria identified by the Region in conformity with the *Growth Plan* are being considered for conversion to mixed use through ROPA 48. The proposed conversions have been identified by the Local Municipalities as having strategic importance in advancing elements of the local urban structure and support the Regional Urban Structure and strategic planning objectives. In the context of Halton Hills, these includes the properties in Acton located at 153, 159, 165, 173 Perth Street and 12 Wallace Street, and one parcel located at 344 Guelph Street in Georgetown. The conversions throughout the Region that are being considered in this ROPA including the proposed locations within the Town of Halton Hills can be found on the map attached as Appendix E.

Town Staff Comments:

- The conversion of these sites should consider a wide range of permitted uses that would enable the area to develop as a mixed-use area over the long-term. These sites may provide opportunities for office (a range of office uses, including multi-tenant office buildings smaller than 20,000 sq.ft.) retail and commercial services, and high-density or live-work residential uses. Conversion of these

lands to provide for a broader range of uses over the long term would support the Town's intensification objectives.

- Section 79.3(13) requires "...local municipalities to establish development criteria to ensure that the redevelopment of any employment lands outside of Employment Areas will retain space for a significant number of jobs". How is a significant amount of jobs defined? In the case of Halton Hills, enough flexibility must be given to these conversion sites to incentivize intensification and redevelopment opportunities that fit within the context of the area.

Town staff also note that as part of the development of the Preferred Growth Concept further discussion with the Region will be required on whether the Gateway designations located south of Steeles Avenue in the Halton Hills Premier Gateway should be examined as potential conversion sites as part of the development of the Preferred Growth Concept given the existing development and/or land use permissions which align with the Town's vision to attract a broad range of employment uses to the area.

Next Steps:

As required by the Planning Act, the proposed ROPA is to be presented at the Statutory Public Open House/Public Meeting in the summer and will be made available to the public on the Region's website at least 20 days before the Statutory Public Meeting. Notification of this engagement opportunity will be provided through the Region's website, newspaper advertisements, mailing lists, social media, stakeholder groups, and other means. Town staff is supporting the Region's communications efforts by using social media to advertise the Open House and inform local residents of future engagement opportunities.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

This report directly aligns to the following values in the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 including:

Foster a Healthy Community

To maintain and enhance a healthy community that provides a clean environment and a range of economic and social opportunities to ensure a superior quality of life in our community.

Preserve, Protect and Enhance our Environment

To preserve, protect and enhance our natural environment for the health benefits and enjoyment it provides to present and future generations.

Foster a Prosperous Economy

To maintain and enhance the economic vitality of the Town through the provision of a wide range of opportunities for economic development.

Achieve Sustainable Growth

To ensure that growth is managed so as to ensure a balanced, sustainable, well planned community infrastructure and services to meets the needs of its residents and businesses

The report is also closely linked with a number of Focus Areas/Priorities including Shaping Growth.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

CONSULTATION:

Planning staff will continue to consult with the different Town departments including, Transportation and Public Works, Recreation and Parks, Economic Development, Climate Change, Finance and Fire and continue to update the Senior Management Team and Council as needed.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

The Region of Halton has ongoing consultation and engagement related to ROPA 48 and the ROPR process. A webpage has been created specifically to inform the public about ROPA 48 and ways to get involved in the process.

ROPA 48 is being advanced under Section 26 of the Planning Act, which requires the amendment to be approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As a result, Section 17(17.1) of the Planning Act applies and requires the Region to circulate a draft ROPA for the Minister's review at least 90 days in advance of providing notification of an Open House and Statutory Public Meeting. Report LPS17-21 presented at the February 23rd Regional Council meeting, authorized the circulation of the draft ROPA 48 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to meet this legislative requirement.

The Planning Act requires both an Open House/Public Information Centre and a Statutory Public Meeting to allow the public to review and provide comments on draft ROPA 48. An Open House/Public Information Centre as well as a Statutory Public Meeting is anticipated in late May/early June. Any comments received though the statutory process will be documented on the Region's public record and responded to by Regional staff prior to bringing forward a recommendation report to Regional Council.

In addition, the Region will be hosting six Public Information Centres on the Growth Concepts Discussion Paper starting from May 4 to May 29th (four municipally focused PIC, one Region wide PIC and one focused on North Aldershot).

Dates for the PICs are as follows:

- Halton Hills: May 4 at 7 p.m.
- Milton: May 6 at 7 p.m.
- Burlington: May 11 at 7 p.m.
- Oakville: May 13 at 7 p.m.
- North Aldershot: May 17 at 7 p.m.
- Region-wide Wrap-up: June 29 at 7 p.m.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life.

This report supports the Environmental Health pillar of Environmental Health and Social Well-Being. ROPA 48 advances components of the Region's Official Plan Review which include planning for growth within Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas, Strategic Growth Corridors and considering limited Employment Land Conversions align well with this pillar.

Overall, the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is:
GOOD.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Upon Council approval of this report, a copy will be forwarded to the Region of Halton, the Local Municipalities of Burlington, Milton and Oakville, Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation and the Grand River Conservation Authority.

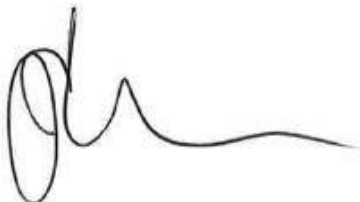
CONCLUSION:

Regional staff have released the draft ROPA 48 to advance components of a Regional Urban Structure as part of the Regional Official Plan Review Process. An Open House/Public Information Centre as well as a Statutory Public Meeting are anticipated in late May/early June. As previously noted, Town staff are generally supportive of the broad purpose and intent of ROPA 48. A number of specific issues have been identified regarding minimum densities and population/employment ratios for the Georgetown and Acton MTSA, the policy and growth expectations for Local Nodes, and the detailed policies that need to be satisfied for employment conversions. It is recommended that the Region address the outstanding issues referenced in this report prior to the adoption of ROPA 48.

Reviewed and Approved by,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bronwyn Parker". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Bronwyn Parker, Director of Planning Policy

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be a stylized "JL". The signature is fluid and extends to the right.

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Development

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "C. Mills". The signature is bold and stylized, with a prominent horizontal stroke.

Chris Mills, Acting Chief Administrative Officer