



TOWN OF  
**HALTON HILLS**  
*Working Together Working for You!*

## REPORT

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**TO:** Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

**FROM:** Greg Macdonald – Senior Planner, Development Review

**DATE:** May 30, 2022

**REPORT NO.:** PD-2022-0035

**SUBJECT:** Public Meeting for a proposed Official Plan Amendment to allow a range of entertainment and hospitality related uses at 8079 Eighth Line (Premier Gateway Employment Area)

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PD-2022-0035, dated May 30, 2022, regarding a “Public Meeting for a proposed Official Plan Amendment to allow a range of entertainment and hospitality related uses at 8079 Eighth Line (Premier Gateway Employment Area)”, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT all agency and public comments be referred to staff for further report regarding the disposition of this matter.

### KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Gilbach (Halton Hills) Inc. has submitted an application for an Official Plan Amendment to allow the subject lands to be included within the Phase 1B Secondary Plan in order to allow a range of entertainment and hospitality related uses, including a waterpark and hotel, at 8079 Eighth Line (Premier Gateway Employment Area).
- The purpose of this application is to establish the proposed principal land use permissions, confirm how much developable land is available on-site and identify the general site/use layout. If the OPA is approved, greater detailed design for the entertainment complex would occur through future Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan applications.
- To date, Town and external agency staff have identified comments pertaining to the ongoing review of a Scoped Sub-Watershed Study, which must be finalized

in order to delineate the lands available for development, as well as other natural heritage and transportation related comments.

- As of the date of this report no comments or concerns have been received from the public. The purpose of the Public Meeting is to obtain comments and feedback from the public. Any comments received will be thoroughly reviewed, evaluated, and included in the Final Recommendation Report to Council at a later date.

## **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

The Town has received an Official Plan Amendment application proposing to allow a range of entertainment and hospitality related uses at 8079 Eighth Line within the Premier Gateway Employment Area.

### **1.0 Location & Site Characteristics**

The subject lands, municipally known as 8079 Eighth Line, are located within the Premier Gateway Employment Area, generally at the northeast corner of Steeles Avenue and Eighth Line; see **SCHEDULE 1 – LOCATION MAP**. The lands have an approximate area of 19 hectares (47 acres) with approximately 320 metres (1,050 ft.) of frontage on Eighth Line and 253 metres (830.0 ft.) of frontage on Steeles Avenue. Roughly 7.8 hectares (19.25 acres) of the site are proposed for development, with the remaining lands containing natural heritage features.

The lands are currently vacant; however, a portion of the property is being used for agricultural purposes. Various natural heritage features, including a tributary of the Sixteen Mile Creek, are also located on-site. Surrounding land uses to the subject lands include:

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| To the North: | Single detached dwellings (immediately abutting to the north-west) and agricultural lands  |
| To the East:  | Agricultural lands across the tributary of Sixteen Mile Creek (which are considered future employment lands within the Premier Gateway Employment Area Phase 2B Secondary Plan)            |
| To the South: | Hornby Presbyterian Cemetery, natural heritage features, the Toronto Premium Outlet Mall and vacant employment lands   |
| To the West:  | Vacant employment lands across Eighth Line which are part of the Phase 1B Secondary Plan and currently subject to planning applications proposing 3 industrial warehouses (ProLogis lands) |

### **2.0 Development Proposal**

On March 30, 2022, the Town deemed complete Official Plan Amendment application D09OPA22.001 submitted by Gilbach (Halton Hills) Inc., through their agent Corbett Land Strategies Inc. (the Applicant). The application is seeking to obtain land use

permissions to allow for a range of entertainment and hospitality related uses, including but not limited to, a waterpark, hotel, convention centre, spa, restaurant(s) and flying theatre; see **SCHEDULE 2 – PROPOSED CONCEPT PLAN**. The proposed main entertainment complex containing the waterpark, hotel and convention centre would be located adjacent to Eighth Line, while separate buildings for the spa and flying theatre would be situated towards the rear of the site, across the watercourse. While the primary intent of the proposed OPA is to facilitate development of the entertainment complex, it also proposes to allow other employment generating uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and offices, consistent with the permissions for lands designated Prestige Industrial Area within the Premier Gateway Employment Area.

Further details about the proposed entertainment complex development are outlined below:

| <b>Design Elements</b>  | <b>Application Proposal</b>  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Gross Floor Area        | 23,400 sq. m (252,000 sq. ft) – combined GFA of all proposed uses  |
| Height                  | Up to 8-storeys for the hotel. Other uses would have varying heights, all less than the height of the hotel        |
| Parking                 | 662 spaces located at main entertainment/water park/hotel complex and 132 spaces at the spa/flying theatre complex |
| Vehicular Access Points | 2 accesses from Eighth Line  |

The proposed overall site concept plan is provided for illustrative purposes; see Figure 1 below.

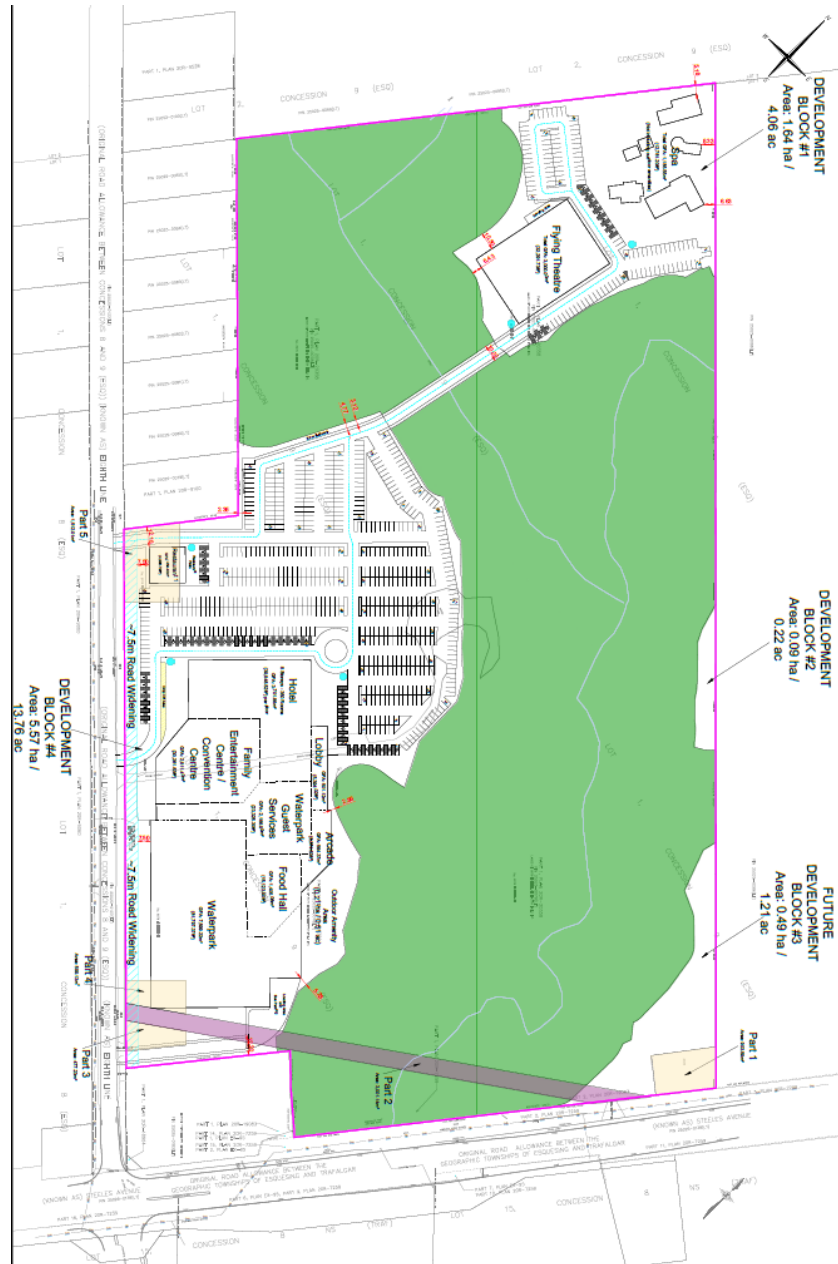


Figure 1

Under the Town of Halton Hills Official Plan, the subject lands are identified as “Phase 2B Employment Area” and “Greenlands”. The Official Plan Amendment application would serve to instead identify the subject lands as being within the “Phase 1B Employment Area” and designate the site as a Special Policy Area to allow for the proposed range of uses. To review the details of the amendment along with the full list of uses proposed to be allowed on the lands see **SCHEDULE 3 – DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT**, attached to this report.

The Applicant intends for the subject Official Plan Amendment application to establish the proposed principal land use permissions, confirm how much developable land is available on-site and identify the general site/use layout for the proposed entertainment

complex. Should the application be approved any future development of the site would first require the submission of Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control applications to implement the OPA permissions. Through these subsequent applications greater detailed design would occur, including the final site layout, parking lot configuration, architectural and urban design of the buildings, landscaping and buffers, etc. It should be noted that the necessary Zoning By-law Amendment application will also require a public consultation process.

A list of reports and drawings submitted in support of the Official Plan Amendment application is attached as **SCHEDULE 4 – SUBMISSION MATERIALS** to this report.

### 3.0 Planning Context

In Ontario, when reviewing applications looking to amend local Official Plans, development proposals are expected to conform with and meet the intent of applicable Provincial, Regional and Municipal policy documents. This section discusses the relevant policy framework that applies to the subject site and proposal.

#### Provincial Policy Statement

The 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides broad based policies that promote an appropriate range and mix of employment, including industrial and commercial uses, to meet the long-term needs of residents and make appropriate use of infrastructure to support the development of healthy communities. Policy direction pertaining to employment areas is set out in Section 1.3 of the PPS.

Section 2.1 of the PPS addresses the protection of natural heritage features including a requirement that development not be permitted on adjacent land without studies to determine that there would be no negative impact on the feature.

The proposal is required to be consistent with the relevant policies of the PPS in accordance with Section 3 of the Planning Act.

#### Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Growth Plan directs new growth to locations that make efficient use of transportation and servicing infrastructure and sets out general policies for employment and commercial lands. Under the 2019 Growth Plan (with 2020 amendments), the subject lands fall within the new Provincially Significant Employment Zone, which is considered an area of high economic output that is strategically located to provide stable, reliable employment across the Region.

As per Section 3 of the Planning Act, the proposal shall conform and not conflict with the Growth Plan.

## Region of Halton Official Plan

The 2009 Regional Official Plan (ROP) designates the portion of the subject lands intended to be redeveloped as Urban Area with an Employment Area overlay. Section 76 of the ROP states that the range of permitted uses within the Urban Area are to be in accordance with Local Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. The ROP includes a number of objectives that speak to providing an appropriate range and balance of employment uses including industrial, office and retail and institutional uses to meet the long-term needs. More detailed policies for Employment Areas are set out in Section 77.1 of the ROP. Section 89 of the ROP requires all development within the Urban Area to be on full municipal services.

Under the Regional Official Plan the subject site falls within the Urban Area lands that are intended to accommodate development during the 2021-2031 phasing period. As per Section 77 of the Regional Plan, development of lands within the 2021-2031 phase is not to occur prior to approval of a municipally led Secondary Plan. However, as a result of an OLT settlement process associated with Regional Official Plan Amendment 47 (ROPA 47)<sup>1</sup>, development of the site is allowed to proceed by way of a local Official Plan Amendment application in place of any Secondary Plan process. The ROPA 47 settlement also grants the ability for any site specific amendment to seek to incorporate the lands within the pre-2021 planning phase. The submitted Official Plan Amendment application proposes to obtain and implement both of these permissions.

The portion of the subject property that contains natural heritage features are identified as forming part of the Regional Natural Heritage System (RNHS). The goal of the Natural Heritage System is to increase the certainty that the biological diversity and ecological function within Halton will be preserved and enhanced for future generations. ROP policies direct that there should be no alteration of any component of the RNHS, unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impact on the natural features or their functions. Section 116.1 of the ROP allows for the boundaries of the RNHS to be refined through the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which could result in additions, deletions and/or boundary adjustments. In this regard, concurrent with the subject Official Plan Amendment application, the Applicant has also submitted a Scoped Sub-Watershed Study to review the environmental features on the subject lands and determine the extent of developable land.

## Town of Halton Hills Official Plan

Under the Town's Official Plan, the property is designated Phase 2B Employment Area (Schedule A8 - Premier Gateway Employment Area Land Use Plan). The objective of the Phase 2B Employment Area is to provide an expansion of the Premier Gateway Employment Area to accommodate employment growth for the 2021 to 2031 planning period. The Official Plan identifies criteria that must be satisfied prior to any

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<sup>1</sup> ROPA 47 was an amendment which addressed the shortfall of employment lands in the Town due to the GTA West and HPBATS corridor protection requirements. The amendment had the effect of replacing the 75 ha. of affected employment land through the adoption of the Phase 1B Secondary Plan (OPA 31B), which applies to the lands directly across Eighth Line to the west.

development occurring within the Phase 2B designated lands, including the completion of a Secondary Plan.

The land use planning exercise for the Phase 2B Secondary Plan is currently underway. The Phase 2B Secondary Plan process is targeted to seek Town Council adoption in the fourth quarter of 2023, following which it will be required to obtain approval by the Region of Halton.

Notwithstanding the site's designation as Phase 2B Employment Area, through the OLT settlement associated with ROPA 47 (discussed earlier in this report) the subject lands have allowance to seek the following permissions:

- submit a local Official Plan Amendment application to obtain development permissions, provided the amendment demonstrates the site can be integrated into the approved Phase 1B Secondary Plan, which applies to the lands across from the site, west of Eighth Line;
- incorporate the subject lands in the pre-2021 Urban Area planning phase.

An application must also demonstrate that Region of Halton and Town of Halton Hills Official Plan policies pertaining to the preparation of a new Secondary Plan have been met.

Consistent with the ROPA 47 settlement permissions, the subject Official Plan Amendment application seeks to:

- redesignate the site from Phase 2B Employment Area (which is subject to an on-going Secondary Plan review process) to Phase 1B Employment Area (which is a designation that is subject to an approved and in force Secondary Plan that allows lands to develop within the pre-2021 Urban Area planning phase).
- Apply a Special Policy Area designation to the site in order to allow the proposed range of entertainment and hospitality related uses contemplated as part of the proposed development.

In support of any local Official Plan Amendment for the entertainment complex, the ROPA 47 settlement requires the Applicant to demonstrate that the proposal is considered a major employment generating commercial use and also sets out the range of studies needed to be submitted in support of an application. These studies, which include a Commercial Needs Study, Scoped Sub-Watershed Study and Traffic Impact Study, have been submitted by the Applicant and are currently under review.

In addition to the facilitating the intended entertainment complex, the proposed Official Plan Amendment also seeks to allow other employment generating uses on-site such as manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and offices, consistent with the permissions of the Prestige Industrial Area land use designation that applies elsewhere within the Premier Gateway Employment Area.

The portion of the property containing the Sixteen Mile Creek tributary and other natural heritage features is designated as "Greenlands". As per Section D6.4.4.4 of the Town's

Official Plan, the Greenlands designation implements the Regional Natural Heritage System policies contained in the Regional Official Plan.

#### Town of Halton Hills Zoning By-law

The portion of the subject lands proposed for development is zoned Agricultural (A) while the portion of lands containing natural heritage features is zoned Environmental Protection One (EP1) under Zoning By-law 2010-0050, as amended. The (A) Zone only permits agricultural uses, not the range of uses proposed for the subject lands.

Therefore, should the subject Official Plan Amendment application be approved, prior to any future development of the lands a Zoning By-law Amendment would be required to rezone the site to an appropriate employment related zone to facilitate the proposed entertainment complex or any other uses allowed through the OPA. The Zoning Amendment would also need to address any necessary site specific zoning provisions required to implement the development proposal (i.e. parking, height, setbacks, etc.).

#### 4.0 Department and Agency Circulation Comments

The Official Plan Amendment application was circulated to Town departments and external agencies for review. The below sections outline the comments, issues and concerns identified by staff to date.

##### Planning

- Staff continue to review the proposed amendment to ensure the requested range of land uses are considered major employment generating commercial uses consistent with the requirements of the ROPA 47 settlement and can be integrated successfully with the Phase 1B Employment Area.

##### Recreation & Parks

- Consideration should be given to the potential for on-site trail connections in accordance with the Town's Active Transportation Master Plan.
- Contiguous blocks of non-developable natural heritage lands should be considered for transfer to the Town as part of any future Site Plan application.

##### Transportation

- The Transportation and Public Works Department continues to review the submitted Traffic Impact Study with respect to both on-site maneuvering and driveway layout and with respect to impacts on the Town of Halton Hills roadway network (predominantly Eighth Line).

##### Region of Halton

- The Region of Halton may require revisions to certain documents submitted in support of the proposal, including the Scoped Sub-Watershed Study. The Region of



Halton continues to review the proposal against matters of regional interest including site contamination, transportation, servicing, etc.

### Conservation Halton

- Conservation Halton continues to review the Sub-Watershed Study with respect to natural heritage and aquatic resource protection.

## 5.0 Public Comments

As of the date of this report, Planning staff have received one email from a local property owner requesting to be notified of all future meetings and decisions for the application.

The purpose of the Public Meeting is to obtain additional comments and feedback from the community. Any additional comments received from the public will also be reviewed, evaluated, and included in the final Recommendation Report to Council.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report is administrative in nature and does not have an impact on the Town's Strategic Plan.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:**

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

### **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Public Engagement has been conducted as follows:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| April 13, 2022: | Notice of Received Application was mailed out to all property owners within 120 m of the subject lands |
| April 26, 2022: | Sign posted on the subject lands explaining the purpose of the applications                            |
| May 19, 2022:   | Notice of Public Meeting published in the Independent & Free Press                                     |
| May 19, 2022:   | Public Meeting Notice mailed out to property owners within 120 m of the subject lands                  |
| June 9 2022:    | Courtesy Notice of Public Meeting to be published in the Independent & Free Press                      |

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

This report is administrative in nature and does not have any financial implications.

Reviewed and approved by,

Jeff Markowiak, Director of Development Review

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer