



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

## MEMORANDUM

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

**FROM:** Bronwyn Parker, Director of Planning Policy

**DATE:** June 2, 2022

**MEMO NO.:** PD-2022-0005

**SUBJECT:** Halton Region Official Plan Amendment No. 49

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### PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Council with an update on comments that were prepared by Town staff and provided to the Region of Halton as it relates to the draft Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 49 (ROPA 49) – “An Amendment to Implement the Integrated Growth Management Strategy”. This memorandum also provides Council with an update on the ROPA 49 process and describes next steps.

### BACKGROUND:

As required by the Provincial Growth Plan, Halton Region has been engaged in a multi-year Integrated Growth Management Strategy which must direct population and employment growth within the Region to the year 2051. Based on direction from Regional Council, a series of Regional Official Plan Amendments have been prepared and sequentially forwarded to Regional Council for adoption.

Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 48 (ROPA 48) was adopted by Regional Council on July 7, 2021 and approved (with slight modifications) by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on November 10, 2021. ROPA 48 applies to all lands within the Region and defines the Regional Urban Structure. It also identifies a hierarchy for strategic growth areas within the Region, including Urban Growth Centres (UGCs), Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), Regional Nodes and Employment Areas. The amendment also included a limited number of Employment Area conversions in order to support the opportunity for mixed-use development within specific strategic growth areas.

ROPA 49 is the second amendment to the Regional Official Plan and implements the results of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy. ROPA 49 is being recommended for adoption at the June 15, 2022 Regional Council meeting. Should Regional Council adopt the amendment, it will be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval.

## **COMMENTS:**

At the February 16, 2022 Regional Council Meeting, Regional staff presented a Preferred Growth Concept which recommended modest expansions to the Regional Urban Boundaries in order to accommodate future population and employment growth to the 2051 planning horizon. At that meeting, Regional Council directed staff to instead implement a Modified Preferred Growth Concept to 2041, requiring that all development be accommodated within existing settlement area boundaries. It also directed that growth between 2041 and 2051 be allocated to the local municipalities through a future amendment to the Regional Official Plan. As such, ROPA 49 sets population and employment forecasts of 931,000 and 420,000 jobs respectively to 2041.

Town staff have carefully reviewed the draft ROPA 49 and have had recent meetings with Regional staff to identify concerns. Comments were prepared by Town staff and sent to Halton Region's Chief Planning Official on May 16, 2022. Those comments are attached to this memorandum as Appendix 1.

Staff highlighted a number of concerns with the draft amendment, including how the majority of growth to 2041 is allocated to the southern municipalities of Oakville and Burlington and the impacts to Halton Hills as a result; concerns regarding proposed changes to Employment Area policies that would result in a loss of existing permissions within the key gateways of the Premier Gateway Employment Area; and updated HPBATS/GTA West Corridor Protection Policies and a potential reduction in available lands for employment development within the Premier Gateway.

Staff have met with representatives from the Region and understand that some of our comments from the May 16, 2022 letter have been addressed and incorporated into the draft ROPA 49 which is before Regional Council for adoption on June 15, 2022.

One of the key concerns for the Town which has not been addressed in the final draft ROPA 49 however is the matter regarding the distribution of growth to 2041.

In order to fully appreciate the impacts of the growth distribution to 2041, one must consider the current population and employment targets in the Regional Official Plan (ROPA 38). As is demonstrated by the following chart (Figure 1), planned growth to 2031 within Halton Hills is essentially now being distributed over an extended planning horizon.

**Figure 1**

Population Distribution ROPA 38 vs ROPA 49				Employment Distribution ROPA 38 vs ROPA 49			
Municipality	ROPA 38 (to 2031)	ROPA 49 (to 2041)	Difference	Municipality	ROPA 38 (to 2031)	ROPA 49 (to 2041)	Difference
Burlington	193,000	240,500	47,500	Burlington	106,000	115,500	9,500
<b>Halton Hills</b>	<b>94,000</b>	<b>95,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>Halton Hills</b>	<b>43,000</b>	<b>46,500</b>	<b>3,500</b>
Milton	238,000	264,000	26,000	Milton	114,000	97,000	-17,000
Oakville	255,000	331,500	76,500	Oakville	127,000	161,000	34,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>780,000</b>	<b>931,000</b>	<b>151,000</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>390,000</b>	<b>420,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>

Where the Town is currently planned to grow to a total population of 94,000 by 2031, ROPA 49 now plans for the Town to achieve a total population of 95,000 by 2041. Similarly, the Town is currently planned to have a total of 43,000 jobs by 2031, which increases by only 3,500 to 46,500 jobs by 2041 in draft ROPA 49. As a result, the Town's future growth has effectively been pushed out over the planning horizon. The financial implications to the Town of this elongated timeframe are unclear.

In addition, this minimal growth in both population and employment to 2041 also has a direct impact on total intensification units. The Town's existing (Regionally approved) intensification target is 5,100 units to 2031. In ROPA 49, that number has dropped to 3,600 units. The reasons for this reduction by the Region over an extended planning horizon are unclear. Based on a review of the Land Needs Assessment which is appended to and supports ROPA 49, there is no justification or rationale provided as to why Halton Hills has seen such a reduction in its currently approved targets. This remains a matter of significant concern.

Staff are however pleased to see that the revised draft ROPA 49 addresses the comments and concerns raised regarding the existing permissions afforded to the Employment Area gateways, adding in a new policy which continues to protect for existing major retail uses at those strategic locations. The revised draft ROPA 49 also provides appropriate protections for the HPBATS and identifies Primary and Secondary Corridor Protection Areas within the GTA West/Hwy 413 Corridor. These revised policies should allow for appropriate development to proceed subject to review and approval by the Ministry and should also facilitate the timely provision of Regional infrastructure, which has been impacted by the uncertainty surrounding the Corridor for quite some time.

## **CONCLUSION:**

As is presented in this memo and through the attached comments provided to the Region, Town staff continue to have concerns regarding a number of items as drafted in ROPA 49. At the time of writing of this memo, ROPA 49 has been scheduled to be

presented to Regional Council for adoption on June 15, 2022. Should Regional Council adopt ROPA 49, it will be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval.

Reviewed and approved by,

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer