



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Keith Hamilton, Senior Planner - Policy

DATE: February 5, 2024

REPORT NO.: PD-2024-016

SUBJECT: Stewarttown Secondary Plan – Preferred Land Use Plan and Policy Direction

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PD-2024-016 dated February 5, 2024, regarding the Stewarttown Secondary Plan – Preferred Land Use Plan and Policy Direction, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the draft Preferred Land Use Plan (attached as part of Appendix 1), and draft technical reports including the Planning and Policy Recommendation Report, which can be found on Let's Talk Halton Hills, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council endorse the draft Preferred Land Use Plan in principle, which concludes Phase 3 of the study, so that it may be used to guide the preparation of the draft Stewarttown Secondary Plan;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Region of Halton, and Credit Valley Conservation for information.

KEY POINTS:

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

- The Stewarttown Secondary Plan project, which consists of four phases, commenced in April of 2021.
- Work and public consultation completed over three phases of the project has helped inform the preparation of a draft Preferred Land Use Plan for Council's consideration, which will be the basis for the Stewarttown Secondary Plan.

- A density of up to 8 units per hectare is being recommended for the Stewarttown Expansion Lands so that future development is in character with the existing Stewarttown community.
- A memorandum and draft Preferred Land Use Plan schedule has been attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- Upon endorsement of the draft Preferred Land Use Plan by Council, Town staff and the consulting team will begin preparing the draft Stewarttown Secondary Plan.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The Stewarttown Secondary Plan project was initiated in April of 2021. This is a coordinated project between Town staff and a consulting team led by MHBC Planning. The requirement for a Secondary Plan dates back to 2009 and the Sustainable Halton project (Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 38), whereby the former Hamlet of Stewarttown and adjacent expansion lands were brought into the urban area of Georgetown. The policy direction flowing from ROPA 38 was implemented into the Town's Official Plan through OPA 10, which was adopted by Council in 2010 and approved by the Region in 2017. Among other matters, OPA 10 identified Stewarttown as a Special Character Area. As such, the purpose of the Secondary Plan is to establish a Land Use Plan for the area and surrounding expansion lands while focusing on preserving the unique character of the community. A map of the Secondary Plan area is attached as Appendix 1.

The Stewarttown Secondary Plan is to be completed over four phases, as set out in the Terms of Reference. Upon endorsement of this report, the project will move into its fourth and final phase, with a number of project milestones having already been reached. In addition to ongoing online engagement, three Public Open Houses have been hosted by Town staff and the project consulting team. The input gathered has helped guide the draft Preferred Land Use Plan and will help inform the preparation of the draft Stewarttown Secondary Plan.

Phase 1 – Background Review

Early in Phase 1, a project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed, made up of internal departmental and external agency representatives. The function of Committee members is to provide input at meetings through commentary on draft project deliverables, based on their area of expertise.

A project Steering Committee was also formed in this phase, made up of Stewarttown residents and Town Councillors. The function of this Committee is to provide comments and critical feedback during the study process and assist with the identification and resolution of issues.

Early engagement efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic included a virtual community walking tour and accompanying public survey, posted online at [Let's Talk Halton Hills](#).

A [Background Review Report](#) was finalized and posted online in December of 2021. This report was largely based on a review of the existing policy and regulatory framework applicable to the Secondary Plan area at the Provincial, Regional and local level. It also includes an overview of key components (servicing, transportation, cultural and natural heritage) which were further studied in the Phase 3 technical reports and will be used to help inform the policies of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan.

Phase 2 – Land Use Alternatives

Phase 2 of the project began in the fall of 2021 and saw the first Public Open House take place virtually on October 27, 2021. The presentation for this event focused primarily on land use options for the expansion lands. These land use options consisted primarily of low and medium density residential forms, including single detached dwellings, townhouse and low-rise apartments. At this event, two key issues were identified through public engagement: density and site access to the expansion lands. Many in attendance expressed concerns over the traffic impacts that increased density from the expansion lands would have on the existing community. Connected to this were concerns that having only one access to the expansion lands through Harrison Place would have largely negative impacts on residents living in that immediate area. More information on early outcomes of public engagement can be found in the [Phase 1 & 2 Public Consultation Summary Report](#) which was posted online in March of 2022.

Also in March of 2022, a [Summary Report](#) was posted online outlining preliminary land use alternatives for the Secondary Plan Area. In addition to an evaluation of the three land use alternatives, the report also summarized the existing conditions in the area and outlined some of the early findings from the ongoing technical studies (transportation, servicing, cultural heritage, agriculture, and natural heritage). This report was circulated to the project TAC and Steering Committee for comment prior to being finalized.

Phase 3 – Preferred Land Use Alternative and Technical Studies

Phase 3 of the project began in the spring of 2022 with the consulting team initiating work on the technical studies needed to inform both policy directions and a draft Secondary Plan for Stewarttown. These technical studies looked at servicing and stormwater management; natural and cultural heritage; transportation and traffic impacts. A virtual Public Open House took place on April 4, 2022, and focused on the evaluation of three land use concept options based on preliminary findings from the ongoing technical work. A draft preferred land use concept for the expansion lands was identified and focused primarily on low density, single detached housing in keeping with the community character. The presentation also looked at policy directions for the whole Plan Area, seeking public input on a draft land use plan.

The virtual Public Open House was well attended and once again saw residents express concerns over density and site access. Residents contended that not enough

technical analysis had been done to explore other road access options into the expansion lands. While secondary site access into greenfield areas is something typically assessed at the development application stage, given the unique circumstances surrounding the location of the expansion lands at the southern end of Harrison Place, it was determined that further study of this issue was needed in order to better address public concerns.

Town staff and the consulting team initiated a Feasibility Study in the fall of 2022 to further evaluate additional potential second access points into the expansion lands. In total, six full vehicular access options, and three emergency access options were evaluated as part of this study. All options were evaluated against potential transportation impacts (e.g. existing road networks); engineering (design and cost); natural heritage impacts; and Provincial policies (e.g. Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the Greenbelt Plan).

The consulting team finalized their work for this study in early 2023, with a final recommendation that the Town not proceed with a secondary access into the expansion lands. The evaluation identified natural heritage constraints for the remaining options, as well as policy challenges. In particular, Greenbelt Plan policies state that infrastructure projects, impacting natural heritage features, should only be considered where there is no other reasonable alternative. The PPS also requires that such a project demonstrate 'no negative impact' on the woodlands and water features present to the south of the expansion lands. This could only be determined through a more detailed Environmental Impact Assessment, which is outside of the scope of this Secondary Plan.

In late fall 2022 and early 2023, the consulting team finalized six studies that helped inform the Preferred Land Use Plan. The studies will provide the basis for the development of the policies for the Stewarttown Secondary Plan. These are posted online at [Let's Talk Halton Hills](#), and include:

- Agricultural Impact Assessment;
- Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment;
- Natural Heritage Memo;
- Servicing and Stormwater Management Analysis;
- Transportation Impact Study; and,
- Planning and Policy Recommendation Report.

Preferred Land Use Plan and Next Steps

Town staff hosted an in person Public Open House on June 7, 2023. The purpose of this event was to present key findings of the technical studies, results of the Feasibility Study, and provide a more detailed outline of the draft Preferred Land Use Plan (PLUP). Town staff and the consulting team also facilitated a workshop activity focused on gathering more feedback on the key components of the PLUP. Questions and concerns raised at this event focused again on expansion lands access and density, with

attendees expressing a desire for a density that reflects the existing Stewarttown area. Following the Public Open House, Town staff posted the workshop questions online in a survey format, to allow more time for responses from those not able to attend. Petitions were also received from a group of Stewarttown residents requesting that i) the density in the expansion lands be capped at 5 units per hectare, and ii) perceived issues with the transportation and servicing studies be addressed.

Since the Public Open House last June, Town staff and the consulting team have further considered the issues raised by the residents with respect to access and density. In November of 2023, a revised Transportation Impact Study was posted online. This revised version includes recommendations for traffic calming measures, and road infrastructure enhancements in the Secondary Plan area that would help address the potential impacts of increased vehicular traffic. On January 19, 2024, Town staff met with a recently formed Stewarttown residents' group. The group submitted questions in advance of the meeting which guided much of the discussion. Town staff from multiple departments were on hand to provide responses and update the group on next steps for the project.

A memorandum prepared by MHBC Planning on the Preferred Land Use Plan is attached to the report as Appendix 1. This provides a summary of the key components, including the three Special Policy Areas (SPA) to be defined in further detail in the draft Secondary Plan. Special Policy Area 1 (Stewarttown South) focuses on the residential lots in and around the Trafalgar Road/15 Sideroad intersection. A key focus of this SPA will be to maintain existing lot sizes/configurations, given they are largely on well and septic services. Special Policy Area 2 (Core Area) consists of Stewarttown Road and the natural heritage area off Mill Pond Drive. A key focus of this SPA will be conserving cultural and natural heritage elements.

Special Policy Area 3 is made up of the Stewarttown expansion lands. A key focus of this SPA is setting a density for future development, which is to be entirely low density residential. Town staff and the consulting team are recommending a density of up to 8 units per net hectare, based on the following:

- This is consistent with the density range of 5-8 units per hectare presented at public open houses throughout the process.
- Section D6.3.5 of the Halton Hills Official Plan stipulates the expansion lands are to be developed as a low-density residential neighbourhood, reflecting the character of the existing Stewarttown community.
- Work completed on the Transportation Impact Study was based on a unit threshold closer to the recommended density.
- A density of up to 8 units per hectare balances the need for more housing locally, with the existing policy framework that seeks to preserve the low-density character of Stewarttown.

For the rest of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan area, staff are recommending a density of up to 5 units per net hectare. This aligns with the current Official Plan policy in place (D1.6.10) for the area and would help ensure the low-density character is preserved.

Following the endorsement of the draft Preferred Land Use Plan by Council, Town staff and the consulting team will work to prepare a draft Stewarttown Secondary Plan. The draft Plan would first be circulated and presented to the TAC and Steering Committee for comment. Following this, staff are planning to present the draft Plan to the public by way of a drop-in Public Open House and Statutory Public Meeting. The draft Plan would be posted online for public review ahead of the Statutory Public Meeting, in accordance with Planning Act requirements. Following this, Town staff and the consulting team will finalize any required revisions to the Secondary Plan before bringing it back to Council for final recommendation.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report identifies a safe and welcoming community as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

The focus of this report is a Preferred Land Use Plan for Stewarttown that focuses on contextually appropriate development on greenfield lands in keeping with the character of the existing community. Natural Areas and Heritage are also a priority, where the preservation of built and natural heritage will be a key focus of the Stewarttown Secondary 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.

Climate change considerations will be further assessed through the preparation of the Secondary Plan. All development is expected to comply with the Town's Green Development Standards as amended from time to time.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement has been conducted as follows: Online Survey, Open House/PIC/Workshop, Stakeholder Meetings, Other (please specify)

- A virtual Public Open House was held on October 27, 2021.
- A virtual Public Open House was held on April 4, 2022.
- An in person Public Open House was held on June 7, 2023.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Planning staff consulted with staff from Development Review, Development Engineering, and Transportation in preparation of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

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

Reviewed and approved by,

Bronwyn Parker, Director of Planning Policy

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning & Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer