



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Melissa Ricci, Senior Policy Planner

DATE: June 5, 2024

REPORT NO.: PD-2024-048

SUBJECT: Official Plan Review Draft Terms of Reference

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PD-2024-048 dated June 05, 2024 with respect to the Draft Terms of Reference for the Official Plan Review Project be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve the attached Draft Terms of Reference outlining the scope of the review and process for the Official Plan Review Project;

AND FURTHER THAT Council authorize the issuance of a Request for Proposal for consultant services to support Planning staff with the Official Plan Review Project, based generally on the draft Terms of Reference attached to this report subject to any minor changes as may be required.

KEY POINTS:

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

- The purpose of this report is to share with Council the Draft Terms of Reference that have been prepared to undertake the statutory review of the Town's Official Plan.
- The Draft Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix A to this report, provide the basis to issue a Request for Proposal to hire a project consultant to support Town staff with delivering the project and outline the proposed project scope, process, and timeline for the review.
- The current Town of Halton Hills Official Plan (HHOP) was adopted by Town Council in September 2006, approved by Halton Region in March 2008, and consolidated to include the most recent Official Plan Amendments in April 2024.

- Pursuant to Section 26(1) of the *Planning Act*, municipalities shall revise new Official Plans within ten years after coming into effect and every five years thereafter unless the Plan is being replaced in its totality in order to ensure conformity/ consistency with Provincial plans, policy statements and matters of Provincial interest.
- A review of the Official Plan will ensure conformity with Provincial policy, legislation and regulations, incorporate appropriate recommendations of recent Master Plans and studies related to land use planning, and guide land use planning in the Town to the year 2051.
- The process will include a significant amount of community engagement and is proposed to follow a two-year work plan divided into five phases: Set the Stage, Refresh the Vision and Confirm Priorities, Assess Directions, Refine the Plan, and Finalize the Plan.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The Town's Official Plan, which is required to be prepared by and in accordance with *The Planning Act*, is an overarching municipal planning document that establishes policies for how land in Halton Hills should be used. It is a forward-looking document that describes the community's vision and goals for development, and establishes directions for municipal decision-making, including:

- a growth strategy;
- land use designations, permitted uses and accompanying policies;
- infrastructure, transportation and public service facilities requirements;
- active and passive parkland/open space requirements;
- built form and design requirements; and
- policies for the protection of the Town's natural and cultural resources.

The existing Town of Halton Hills Official Plan (HHOP) was adopted by Council in 2006 and approved by the Region of Halton in March 2008. A major Official Plan Review was completed in 2010 in concert with the Sustainable Halton exercise to achieve conformity with Provincial Plans and policies, including the 2006 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Provincial Policy Statement. The current Plan provides an excellent foundation for the preparation of a new Plan which will incorporate Regional policies and conform with current Provincial policy, provide direction on land use planning matters, including criteria for evaluating new development proposals, and position Halton Hills for the next phase of community building to the year 2051.

Provincial Legislation, Plans and Policies

The *Planning Act* sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario. Specifically, Section 2 of the *Planning Act*, indicates that municipalities, in carrying out responsibilities under the Act, shall have regard to matters of provincial interest including:

- the conservation and management of natural resources;
- the protection of the agricultural resources of the Province;
- the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest;
- the orderly development of safe and healthy communities;
- the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing;
- the adequate provision of employment opportunities; and,
- the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to a changing climate.

Since the HHOP came into effect in 2008, the Province has made significant changes to the *Planning Act*, the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan. In addition, the Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017) and the Greenbelt Plan (2017) have been updated. More recently, the Province has advanced a number of legislative and policy changes that are designed to respond to the housing crisis and expedite construction, including the pending replacement of the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and the Growth Plan (2020) with the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement. The HHOP must be revised within the context of these changes.

On August 22, 2023, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing advised the Mayor in writing that the Town of Halton Hills' Housing Target is 9,500 homes to be constructed by 2031. The Mayor confirmed the Town's commitment to meeting the 9,500 homes target and outlined the actions and constraints that the Town will need to address in order to achieve the target. The Halton Hills Official Plan Review (HHOPR) will need to consider these housing targets.

Regional Official Plan Review

The Region of Halton initiated a review of its Official Plan in 2014. A number of technical discussion papers were prepared as part of the Review and two Regional Official Plan Amendments were submitted to the Province for approval. ROPA 48 and ROPA 49 were approved by the Province in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

ROPA 48 implements components of the Regional Urban Structure to establish a hierarchy of strategic growth areas in the Regional Official Plan. ROPA 49, as amended by the Province through Bill 162 (*Getting It Done Act*), in May 2024, extended the planning horizon to 2051, distributed population and employment growth to that horizon amongst the four local municipalities and expanded the urban boundary in Halton Hills to accommodate the projected population and employment growth to the year 2051. Considering that Bill 162 amends ROPA 49 to ensure that sufficient land is allocated to accommodate population and employment growth in the Town to 2051, and reflects Council's endorsed growth concept, further urban boundary expansions are not intended to be considered through the HHOPR. Appendix B to the Draft Terms of Reference includes the Council endorsed community and employment urban expansion areas.

The HHOP must incorporate recent Regional Official Plan Amendments including ROPA 48 and ROPA 49. In November 2022, Bill 23 introduced the removal of land use

planning responsibilities from upper tier municipalities, including the Region of Halton. Bill 185, which was introduced on April 10, 2024, confirms Halton Region as an upper tier without planning responsibility as of the later of July 1, 2024, or when Bill 185 receives Royal Assent. Any pending work on the previous Regional Official Plan Review including ROPA 50 (updates to the Natural Heritage System and Agricultural Policies) and other minor policy amendments to ensure conformity to Provincial Plans will need to be completed by the Town through the HHOPR. The Review must also address planning responsibilities for the Town and coordination with the Region and other agencies because of their new role in a single-tier planning regime.

Project Goals and Objective

The new Official Plan will reflect the strengths and long-term vision of the community and guide growth in the Town to the year 2051. The HHOPR Project will result in a concise forward-looking policy document that:

- conforms to new or revised upper tier policies;
- reflects the community's vision of the future;
- responds to the Town's current growth and development context;
- is in keeping with the Town's three-pronged growth strategy consisting of: Intensification inside the Georgetown and Acton Built Up Area (BUA), Compact residential and mixed-use development within Designated Greenfield Areas (DGA) and development within Designated Employment Areas with a focus on an expanded Premier Gateway;
- coordinates all major components of the community's physical development including transportation, parks, housing, cultural heritage, environment and open space;
- incorporates the pertinent recommendations of the Town's Master Plans and Studies related to land use planning in a manner that is appropriate for a policy document; and,
- serves as a framework for reviewing whether specific development proposals and projects align with the policies as well as addressing other implementation matters.

The new Official Plan will guide the creation and use of implementation tools, such as detailed zoning regulations, site plan requirements, incentive programs, pre-consultation and complete application requirements and other municipal documents. Area Specific Secondary Plans that are in force and effect will be incorporated into the new Official Plan to present a concise and complete land use policy document. A review of the Secondary Plans will not be required as part of this project. On-going Secondary Plan reviews will continue in accordance with the approved project Terms of Reference for the same.

Scope of Work

The Official Plan Review will be completed in five phases. A detailed overview of the project phases and deliverable are included under Section 5 of the Draft Terms of Reference (see appendix A).

Phase 1- Set the Stage

Phase 1 is the project initiation phase and will include the project kick off meeting with the Technical Advisory and the Community Working Group. During this Phase, the Town will promote the project to the community and ensure project visibility. The consultant will also prepare a Background Report to provide an initial assessment of the existing Official Plan.

A comprehensive Communication and Engagement Plan will be prepared by the consultant and will include initial consultation with the approval authority and other relevant agencies like the Conservation Authorities in order to meet the legislative requirements for this review. Working with the Town's Manager of Culture and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, the Town will reach out to the Indigenous Communities to welcome their interest and participation in the HHOPR (for additional information regarding Indigenous Engagement see Section 7.0 Engagement Strategy).

To officially launch the project, Town staff will create a video introducing the Official Plan Review and showcasing Town highlights – past, present, and future. The video will help generate interest in the project while showcasing Halton Hills' key initiatives. Town staff will launch the Let's Talk Halton Hills engagement site and prepare an online survey to gather initial community feedback. The project launch will be supported by media releases and social media, where applicable. The results of the survey will be provided to the consultant to be considered as part of the initial feedback of the project and assist in the preparation of future engagement opportunities.

Phase 2: Refresh the Vision & Confirm Priorities

At the beginning of this phase, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, a Community Working Group (CWG) meeting, and a Public Open House will take place to present the results of the Background Report prepared during Phase 1.

In addition, leveraging the vibrant local art community, Town staff will host a 'What is Next for our Town?' Art Contest at the beginning of this Phase. The Town will invite local artists of diverse backgrounds, experience, and practice to submit their proposals highlighting how they would work with Town staff to run an engagement session with the community using art. The winner will be selected to host, with the assistance of Town staff and support from the Consultant, an art interactive community engagement session at the end of Phase 2 of the Project. This engagement session would aim to gather feedback from the community on their vision for the Town to the year 2051 and identify key goals and priorities through this review.

During Phase 2, the consultant will prepare the required technical reports including a Commercial Needs Assessment to examine the current market context and expected demand for retail and service commercial floorspace over the study period to 2051 and propose appropriate policy directions; a Growth Capacity Analysis to corroborate growth projections and land budgets for the Town; and, a Housing Strategy to identify key actions for the Town to undertake to increase housing, enhance housing choices and accelerate

housing delivery to achieve complete communities. In addition, during this Phase a review of the Agricultural and Natural Heritage policies will be required. The review will include an analysis of required policy updates, appropriate agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses and a desktop review of the Natural Heritage System mapping.

Based on the results of the Background Report and technical reports, Research Briefs related to key thematic policy areas (e.g., growth management and density, complete community, infrastructure, employment and commercial, housing, natural heritage and water resources, agricultural system and rural areas, parkland, cultural heritage and urban design) will be prepared. The Research Briefs will be concise and clear information sheets explaining the key areas for review to the community. In keeping with the work the Town is undertaking on climate change adaptation and mitigation, climate change should be integrated into all themes. The Research Briefs will guide community engagement through the key thematic policy areas. In addition, Phase 2 will provide an opportunity to consider new trends, ideas, and policy implications (e.g., urban agriculture, green planning, innovative hubs).

A Public Open House will be held at the end of this phase to collect feedback on the vision and priorities. During the Public Open House, an interactive engagement session will be held by the artist who wins the Art Contest (during the beginning of Phase 2), with assistance from Town staff and support from the consulting team. The consultant will be responsible for incorporating feedback collected during the interactive engagement session. At the end of Phase 2, the current OP Policies will be reviewed, consolidated, and simplified to facilitate the preparation of a Policy Directions Report during Phase 3 of the project. A Council Workshop will take place to provide Council a status update on the project and public engagement.

Phase 3: Assess Directions

During Phase 3, a Policy Directions Report will be prepared to provide the basis for the draft policies in the new Official Plan and the framework for making planning decisions. Policy Direction Briefs by key thematic policy areas will be prepared to highlight new and revised policies. The Policy Direction briefs will be concise and clear information sheets explaining the key areas that require updates to the community.

Before amending an Official Plan as part of a statutory review, the Town must hold a Council meeting to discuss the revisions that may be needed. To address this requirement, during this phase, the policy directions report will be presented and discussed at a Formal Public Meeting of Council.

Phase 4: Refine the Plan

During Phase 4, the draft Official Plan will be prepared and presented to the community. A series of Public Meetings/ Workshops will take place to seek feedback on the draft HHOP. The draft HHOP will be revised accordingly.

Phase 5: Finalize the Plan

During this Phase, the draft HHOP will be finalized, and a public meeting and Statutory Public Meeting of Council will take place. Following the Statutory Public Meeting, public comments will be addressed and the HHOP will be finalized and brought forward to Council for adoption. The new HHOP will then be submitted to the corresponding approval authority. The Consultant will work with Town staff to prepare and deliver a Council presentation to support the final Recommendation Report.

Other Local Strategies/Priorities

Through the review of the Official Plan, special consideration will be given to Town initiatives including the Strategic Plan Objectives and the Transportation Master Plan. These initiatives provide important content to the Official Plan and any relevant recommendations from these initiatives are to be integrated into the new HHOP in a manner that is appropriate for a land use policy document.

Project Team and Committees

Under the direction of the Director of Planning Policy, the Town's Project Manager will manage, coordinate, and supervise the HHOP Review Project. A Project Leadership Team comprised of Town staff from key departments such as Development Engineering, Transportation and Economic Development will provide guidance through the execution of the work plan.

The HHOP Review will be guided by a Technical Advisory Committee and a Community Working Group

Technical Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee will be comprised of key representatives of:

- Pertinent Town of Halton Hills departments
- Provincial Ministries (MMAH, MTO)
- The Niagara Escarpment Commission
- Halton Region
- Credit Valley Conservation
- Conservation Halton
- Grand River Conservation
- Halton Hills Hydro and other utility companies as required
- Halton District School Board
- Halton Catholic District School Board
- Conseil Scolaire Viamonde (Public French board)
- Conseil Scolaire Mon Avenir (Separate French Board)
- Other public agencies, as determined appropriate

The role of the Technical Advisory Committee is as follows:

- Review project deliverables and provide comments during the study process.
- Assist with issue identification and resolution.
- Members to liaise with their respective organizations to ensure study awareness and to provide one-window coordination on behalf of their organization.
- Provide data input.
- Meet on a regular basis to monitor the progress of the study.

Community Working Group:

The Community Working Group (CWG) will be comprised of selected members of the community and special interest groups, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Neighbourhood Associations
- Business Improvement Areas
- Local businesses
- Halton Hills Agriculture Roundtable
- Resident Groups/Associations
- Seniors/Youth groups
- Developers and landowners

Composition of the CWG will be confirmed upon project initiation. The role of the CWG is to bring together community resources, and to provide local knowledge and input at key stages of the project and/or on key issues.

Council Engagement

Council members will be engaged throughout all project phases via Council Reports, presentations, and workshops. Updates to Council via reports, presentations and workshops will be scheduled as required to inform Council of key project milestones. Council Workshops at key project milestones will focus on engaging Council on their goals and objectives for the Official Plan Review and providing information on Council's statutory obligations regarding conformity with the Provincial policy and legislative framework. The Consultant will be responsible for preparing a presentation and any other materials required for the workshop.

Community Engagement

Community engagement and public participation will form a large component of the Official Plan Review. During the initial Phase of the project the consulting team will prepare a Community Engagement Plan for the Official Plan Review Project which will guide consultation and engagement through all project phases. The Community Engagement Plan must conform to the Town's Public Engagement Charter and align with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and branding requirements outlined by the Town's Communications Department. Additional information on the Community Engagement Plan requirements can be found in Section 7.0 of the Terms of Reference.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

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

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report impacts and/or helps address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target through climate mitigation.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement will be required; consultation with Communications staff to follow.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Planning staff have consulted with the Climate Change, Communications, Development Engineering, Economic Development, Finance, Recreation and Parks, and Transportation Divisions. Their input has been considered through the preparation of the draft Terms of Reference.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report will be funded through an existing approved budget source.

A total budget of \$506,797.05 has been approved to cover the costs associated with completion of the Official Plan Review Project.

Reviewed and approved by,

Bronwyn Parker, Director of Planning Policy

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning & Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer