



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Keith Hamilton, Senior Planner - Policy

DATE: July 24, 2024

REPORT NO.: PD-2024-054

SUBJECT: Stewarttown Secondary Plan – Recommendation Report

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PD-2024-054, dated July 24, 2024, regarding the final recommended Stewarttown Secondary Plan (Official Plan Amendment No. 57), be received;

AND FURTHER THAT in support of Official Plan Amendment No. 57 to the Town of Halton Hills Official Plan, the final Secondary Plan and associated Schedules;

AND FURTHER THAT Council receives for information in support Official Plan Amendment No. 57, the complete set of background studies, listed in Appendix 2 to this report and available on Let's Talk Halton Hills;

AND FURTHER THAT Town of Halton Hills Official Plan Amendment No. 57, dated July 24, 2024 (attached as Appendix 1 to this report), be adopted;

AND FURTHER THAT all interested agencies listed in Report PD-2024-054 and those members of the public who have requested notice be advised of Council's decision regarding the adoption of the Secondary Plan;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report be sent to the Region of Halton, Credit Valley Conservation, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

KEY POINTS:

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

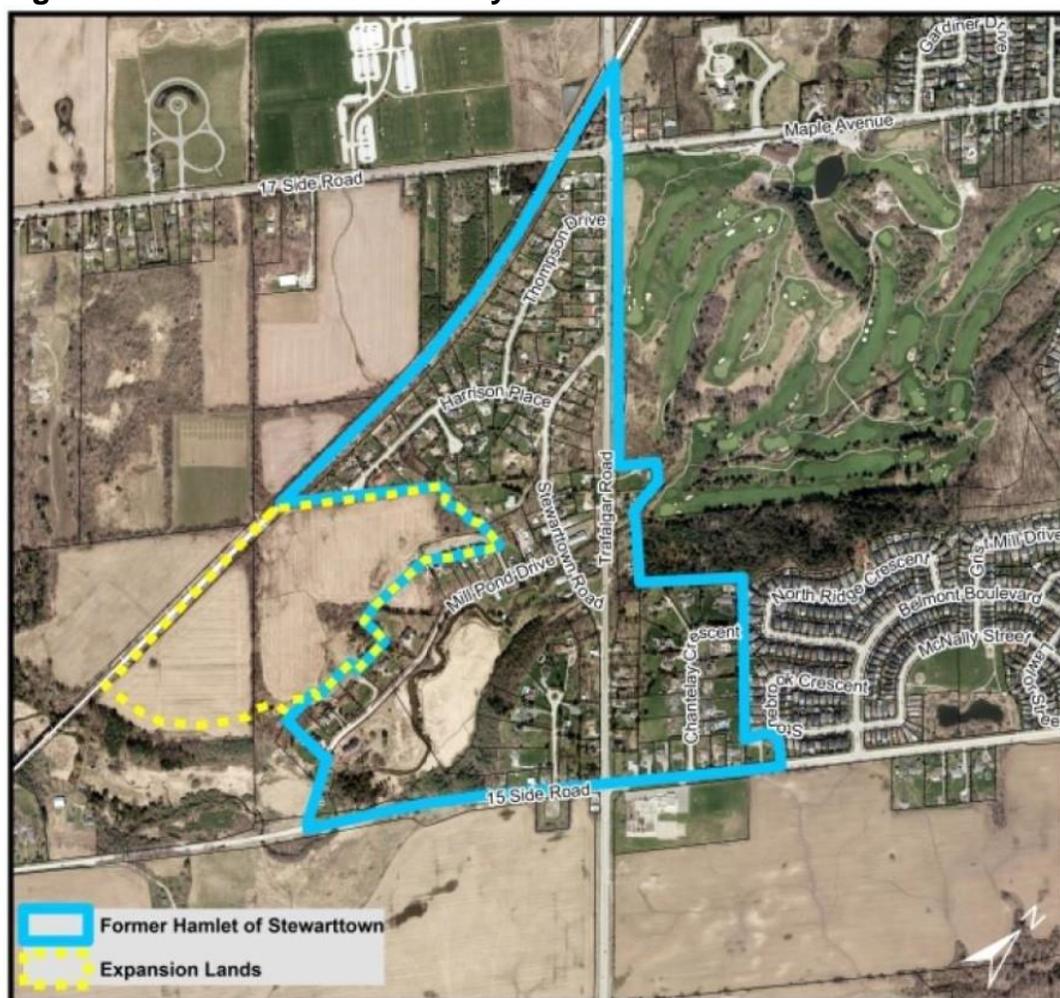
- The Stewarttown Secondary Plan project has been completed. Town staff are recommending that Council adopt the Secondary Plan by way of Official Plan Amendment 57 (attached as Appendix 1 to the report).
- Careful consideration was given to applicable policies of the Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan, Regional Official Plan and Town of Halton Hills Official Plan in preparing the Secondary Plan.
- Public consultation and engagement have been a key component of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan project. This has included four Public Open Houses and multiple online surveys planned with the intention of soliciting public feedback at different stages of the project.
- Continuous consultation and comment were sought from external agencies and internal departments in each phase of the Secondary Plan project.
- Minor revisions have been made to the Secondary Plan as a result of comments and feedback received from external agencies and the public since the Statutory Public Meeting held on June 17, 2024. This has included wording changes in the Secondary Plan (attached as Appendix 2 to this report), and minor mapping changes to Schedule H9-1 Land Use Plan (attached as Appendix 3 to this report).
- A detailed written submission from the Solicitor on behalf of the owner of the expansion lands was provided as part of the Statutory Public Meeting. Town staff have provided responses to concerns raised in a document attached as Appendix 4 to this report.
- Upon Council approval of OPA 57 (the Stewarttown Secondary Plan), staff will issue a Notice of Decision in accordance with Planning Act requirements.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

1. Location and Project Background

The Stewarttown Secondary Plan Area is predominantly located west of Trafalgar Road, between 15 Side Road and Maple Avenue, and the CN rail line (see Figure 1 below). The area is made up of the former Hamlet of Stewarttown and adjacent expansion lands to the southwest. The former hamlet (recognized as the existing community) is made up of the historic core area (Stewarttown Road and Mill Pond Drive), and more recently established Harrison Place and Thompson Drive to the north, Black Creek Court to the south, and Chantelay Crescent to the east. The expansion lands include both Natural Heritage System, and approximately 17 hectares of land currently used for agricultural purposes.

Figure 1: Stewarttown Secondary Plan Area



The Stewarttown Secondary Plan project commenced in April of 2021. The purpose of the Secondary Plan is to establish contextually appropriate policies for the existing community, while guiding the future development of the expansion lands. A consulting team, led by MHBC Planning, was awarded a contract to complete a Secondary Plan for Stewarttown, as outlined in report [PD-2021-0013](#). Guided by a Terms of Reference, the project was completed over four phases, each involving public engagement and completed studies, that would feed into the final Secondary Plan. Studies that guided the Preferred Land Use Plan, and Secondary Plan, included a Transportation Study, Servicing Plan, Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment, Natural Heritage System Analysis, and Policy Directions Report. A detailed summary of the work completed in each phase is available in report [PD-2024-016](#), while copies of all project studies and a Public Consultation Summary can be accessed at the [Let's Talk Halton Hills](#) project page.

2. Policy Context

From the outset, the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2020), A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan 2020), the Regional Official Plan and the Town's Official Plan provided the overarching policy framework to guide the development of the Secondary Plan. In developing the Stewarttown Secondary Plan, the project team has been faced with the challenge of developing policies that are contextually appropriate for an established residential area with rural community characteristics, while adhering to applicable policies within the Plans noted. The final plan being recommended for adoption includes both policies to preserve the existing community character and natural heritage, and policies to guide future growth in the expansion lands.

a) Provincial Policy Statement (PPS 2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS 2020) stipulates that “settlement areas vary significantly in terms of size, density, population, economic activity, diversity and intensity of land uses, service levels and types of infrastructure available”. Stewarttown was historically designated as Hamlet and the low-density character throughout the community is reflective of that designation. Although Stewarttown was integrated into the Georgetown Urban Area through Regional Official Plan Amendment 38 and local Official Plan Amendment 10, it is recognized as a Special Character Area in the Halton Hills Official Plan. The Special Character Area classification distinguishes Stewarttown from Vision Georgetown and Southeast Georgetown.

The PPS mandates that settlement areas be the focus of growth and development in Ontario (section 1.1.3). The Stewarttown Secondary Plan area is within a settlement area and therefore must include policies that speak to growth and development. In assessing the plan's conformity with the PPS 2020, the following subsections are considered:

- 1.1.3.2 which speaks to, among other things, the need to make efficient use of land and resources.
- 1.1.3.6 which states new development in Designated Growth Areas (DGAs) should be compact, with a mix of uses and densities.

Section 2.2.7 of the Growth Plan (2020) provides further guidance in planning DGAs. A key component of the Growth Plan is that it sets a minimum density target for DGAs in Halton Region at 50 residents and jobs per hectare. The Stewarttown Secondary Plan Area is considered part of the broader DGA in Halton Hills and therefore appropriate development densities must be considered with that comprehensive context in mind when planning for future growth.

Through Official Plan Amendment 57, the Stewarttown Secondary Plan will set development densities for the existing community (up to 5 units per hectare) and

expansion lands (up to 8 units per hectare) that are keeping with the area's existing low-density character. With respect to PPS 2020 and Growth Plan 2020 conformity, the Secondary Plan:

- Includes policies to facilitate the development of the expansion lands and, increase the supply of low-density residential units and potential additional residential units (ARUs).
- Provide planned densities for both the existing community and expansion lands within the context of the Town's overall growth management strategy.
- Will allow for a more compact low-density residential form within the expansion lands than what currently exists in Stewarttown.

b) Proposed Provincial Planning Statement

On April 10, 2024, the Province released an updated version of the [proposed Provincial Planning Statement](#), which is intended to consolidate the Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan into one document. Key elements of the PPS 2020 and Growth Plan 2020 remain, including efficient use of land and resources; supporting general intensification and redevelopment, and establishing density targets in DGAs. Notable policies in draft section 2.3.1 of this document include:

- 2.3.1.4 "Planning authorities are encouraged to establish and implement minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment within built-up areas, based on local conditions."
- 2.3.1.5 "Planning authorities are encouraged to establish density targets for designated growth areas, based on local conditions. Large and fast-growing municipalities are encouraged to plan for a target of 50 residents and jobs per gross hectare in designated growth areas."

The existing community in the Stewarttown area, which has been built out for several years, currently has a set density cap of up to 5 units per hectare in Section D1.6.10 of the Halton Hills Official Plan. Specifically: "The maximum density shall not exceed 5 units per net residential hectare on lands identified as Residential Special Policy Area 10, as shown on Schedule A3 of this Plan, in recognition of the distinctive low-density character of the community of Stewarttown." Town staff interpret draft section 2.3.1.4 as a guiding policy for development Town-wide, which takes into consideration higher density targets being planned elsewhere in the built-up areas.

With respect to draft section 2.3.1.5, Halton Hills is not currently considered a 'large and fast-growing municipality' in draft Schedule 1 of the Provincial Planning Statement. As such, the Town can continue to plan for a density in the Stewarttown expansion lands that reflects local conditions. Higher development densities have been, or will be, established in other greenfield areas in the Town.

c) Halton Region Official Plan

Section 77(5) of the Halton Region Official Plan (ROP) requires local municipalities to prepare Area-Specific Plans (including Secondary Plans) for the development and redevelopment of communities. This section also includes a list of what should be included in a Plan, along with supporting studies. In the context of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan, not all criteria listed in section 77(5) are applicable given the limited existing land uses and capacity for development in the proposed Secondary Plan Area. Key components of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan that help address section 77(5) of the ROP include:

- Overall goal and objectives of the Secondary Plan;
- Policies for the protection of the Natural Heritage System;
- Residential development densities;
- Provision of parks and open space;
- Consideration for active transportation as part of the Transportation Plan;
- Requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments.

Additionally, section 89(3) of the ROP requires that all new development within the Urban Area be on the basis of connection to Halton Region's municipal water and wastewater system. It is a requirement of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan that all new development, including the expansion lands, be connected to this system.

d) Changing Planning Responsibilities

Provincial Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, proposed the removal of planning responsibilities from certain upper tier planning authorities, including the Region of Halton. Through the enactment of Bill 185, the *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024*, this change was finalized, coming into effect July 1, 2024. Two key changes that have impacted the Stewarttown Secondary Plan are that the Town will now assume responsibility for the ROP, and that Halton Region will no longer be an approval authority over for Official Plans and Official Plan Amendments, including Official Plan Amendment 57.

Town staff have continuously consulted with Region staff through all phases of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan project. This included circulating the draft Secondary Plan and incorporating comments received into both the second and third drafts. Natural Heritage System policies included in the Stewarttown Secondary Plan reflect largely what was included in the former Regional Natural Heritage System (RNHS). Region staff also provided comment on the Transportation Impact Assessment and Servicing Plan components of the project, which fed into sections H9.4.9 and H9.4.10 of the Secondary Plan.

e) Town of Halton Hills Official Plan

Section G3.1 of the Halton Hills Official Plan (HHOP) identifies the purpose and intent of Secondary Plans, which aligns with section 77(5) of the Halton Region Official Plan. The section goes on to further identify the studies from which Secondary Plans are to be based. For the Stewarttown Secondary Plan, the following studies were completed:

- Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment;
- Servicing and Stormwater Management Analysis;
- Agricultural Impact Assessment;
- Transportation Impact Assessment;
- Natural Heritage System Memorandum; and,
- Planning and Policy Recommendations Report.

The Stewarttown Secondary Plan also takes into account HHOP sections related to the Stewarttown area and expansion lands. Section D1.6.10 currently designates the existing Stewarttown community as Residential Special Policy Area 10, and includes a density cap of up to 5 units per hectare. This density cap will continue to exist in the Secondary Plan, applying to all lands designated Stewarttown Residential Area (outside of the expansion lands).

Section D6.3 Future Residential Mixed Use Area (FRMUA) applies to the expansion lands (identified as Special Policy Area 3 in the Secondary Plan). This section more broadly outlines the objectives and guiding policies for developing lands designated FRMUA. Specific to Stewarttown, subsection D6.3.5 states: “It is the policy of this Plan that the expansion area to the community of Stewarttown shall be developed as a low density residential neighbourhood, in keeping with the character of the existing community of Stewarttown.” The density for the expansion lands set at 8 units per hectare is higher than that of the existing community, but below what is typical for the HHOP’s Low Density Residential Area designation. In setting this density, Town staff believe the general intent of subsection D6.3.5 has been met.

3. Public Consultation

The four phases of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan project included a variety of public consultation and engagement initiatives. The project included four Public Open Houses (2 virtual and 2 in-person) with a combined attendance of 248 individuals. The project also included four online surveys, resulting in 72 individual responses. Additionally, staff met with landowners and residents virtually, by phone and in person, and received input submitted from the public via email, phone, in person and online at [Let’s Talk Halton Hills](#).

Phase one of the project included an extensive research component, looking into all relevant policy documents identified in the project Terms of Reference. The key deliverable from this was a Project Background Report, which was finalized in late 2021 and posted on Let’s Talk Halton Hills for public access. This phase also included virtual

public engagement initiatives, including a virtual tour of the Plan Area and public survey, both posted on Let's Talk Halton Hills for review and comment. Council was provided an update on the project through PD-2021-0071 in December of 2021.

Phase two of the project began in the fall of 2021 and saw the first Public Open House take place virtually on October 27. 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 area.

A second 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 form. The presentation also looked at policy directions for the whole Plan Area, seeking public input on a draft land use plan. Town staff followed up this event with a short online survey focused on gathering feedback to inform the Preferred Land Use Plan.

The third Public Open House, and first in person, was held on June 7, 2023 at the Hillsvie Active Living Centre in Georgetown. The event included a drop-in session where the public could interact informally with the project team, ahead of the consultant-led presentation. The presentation included a summary of the results of the Feasibility Analysis (previously reported on in PD-2024-016), the updated Preferred Land Use Plan, and next steps. Town staff and the consulting team also facilitated a workshop activity focused on gathering more feedback on the key components of the Special Policy Areas identified in the draft Preferred Land Use Plan. Town staff followed up this event with a short online survey which included the workshop questions from the Public Open House.

Since the project began, the Let's Talk Halton Hills [project page](#) has served as the primary hub for the public to access information (e.g. project plans and studies) and ask questions. This page was routinely updated by Town staff throughout the project, including three sets of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). In total, 29 FAQs were posted, each with a drafted response from Town staff, covering off key themes, including expansion lands access and density, traffic and servicing, and natural heritage. Two Public Consultation Summary reports are available on this page, which provide detailed analysis of the four online surveys conducted at different stages of the project.

a) Public Open House and Statutory Public Meeting

A drop-in Public Open House at Town Hall, followed by a Statutory Public Meeting before Council, took place on June 17, 2024. The drop-in Public Open House provided staff an opportunity to discuss the draft Secondary Plan and answer questions more informally ahead of the Statutory Public Meeting. The Statutory Public Meeting saw the members of the project team (Town staff and MHBC Planning) present the draft Secondary Plan before Council, where members of the public had the opportunity to provide oral and written submissions. Town staff also brought forward report [PD-2024-048](#) at this meeting, which provided a summary of public consultation and engagement and key highlights of the draft Stewarttown Secondary Plan. Approximately 46 individuals attended these events. Five oral submissions were made at the Statutory Public Meeting. Four of these are landowners and residents within the Secondary Plan Area, while the other is a nearby resident of Georgetown.

Comments from the residents within the Secondary Plan Area focused more generally on the need to preserve the rural character of Stewarttown by limiting the density in the expansion lands. These landowners also expressed concern over the potential impact of any development in the expansion lands, where access is limited to Harrison Place. Other comments touched on the need to preserve cultural and natural heritage and avoid any intensified development that would impact the quality of life of those already living in the area. The other comments from a landowner residing outside of the Plan Area focused on a lack of housing opportunities for young people in Halton Hills and the potential for a higher density in the expansion lands if another road was built to accommodate traffic.

Three written submissions were also received, both ahead of, and immediately following the Statutory Public Meeting: one from Goodmans LLP (solicitor for the owner of the expansion lands), one from a representative of the St. John's Anglican Church, and one from a representative of the project Steering Committee.

The submission from the Steering Committee representative (and resident within the Secondary Plan Area) voices concerns over the density of development in the expansion lands. It ultimately supports the draft Secondary Plan's density cap of up to 8 units per hectare, and requests that staff and Council do not consider going above that.

The submission from the representative of the St. John's Anglican Church voices concerns over the representation of cultural heritage in the draft Secondary Plan, with a particular focus on the St. John's Anglican Cemetery, located at 11091 Trafalgar Road. While not all requests for revisions could be accommodated in the final Secondary Plan, staff have made some modifications. These are outlined further below.

The submission received from Goodmans LLP on behalf of the owner of the expansion lands focused primarily on density in Special Policy Area 3 of the Secondary Plan. A number of arguments are made in the letter, along with a request that the Secondary Plan be amended to designate the expansion lands Low Density Residential Area or,

alternatively, defer the setting of a density target in the expansion lands until further study and analysis is undertaken through the development approvals process. A more detailed outline of this submission, along with staff responses, is provided as Appendix 4 to this report.

b) Stewarttown Community Association

The Stewarttown Community Association (SCA) formed in late 2023 and has been an active participant in the Secondary Plan project. Representatives of the group have met with Town staff and provided oral submissions at both the presentation of the Preferred Land Use Plan before Council on March 25, 2024, and at the June 17 Statutory Public Meeting.

In April, the SCA provided comments on the draft Secondary Plan. In total, 28 comments suggesting modifications to the Secondary Plan were provided. All comments were carefully considered and where appropriate revisions have been incorporated into the draft version of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan that was posted online ahead of the June 17 Statutory Public Meeting.

4. Public Agency Submissions

a) Region of Halton

Region of Halton staff have been active participants throughout the project. This has included reviewing and commenting on technical studies and serving on the Technical Advisory Committee. Their key contributions have included:

- Assistance in preparing Terms of Reference for the Transportation Impact Study (TIS) and Servicing Plan.
- Comments on the TIS, Servicing Plan, Agricultural Impact Assessment, and Natural Heritage System Memorandum.
- Suggested modifications to the Servicing and Infrastructure, Natural Heritage System, and development standards policies of the Secondary Plan.

Regional comments have been carefully considered and where appropriate, revisions have been incorporated into the final version of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan.

b) Credit Valley Conservation

Credit Valley Conservation staff have been active participants throughout the project. This has included reviewing and commenting on technical studies, the Feasibility Analysis (undertaken to assess road options through the Natural Heritage System), and serving on the Technical Advisory Committee. Their key contributions have included:

- Comments on the Servicing Plan, Agricultural Impact Assessment, and Natural Heritage System Memorandum.

- A key consultation partner in the development of the Feasibility Analysis.
- Suggested modifications to the Servicing and Infrastructure, Natural Heritage System, and development standards policies of the Secondary Plan.

Credit Valley Conservation comments have been carefully considered and where appropriate, revisions have been incorporated into the draft version of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan that was posted online ahead of the June 17 Statutory Public Meeting.

c) Canadian National Rail Company

On May 2, 2024, Town staff received comments from Canadian National Rail (CN) on the draft Stewarttown Secondary Plan. CN have continuously been provided project updates and circulations throughout the project given the proximity of the rail line on the southeastern border of the Secondary Plan Area. Comments provided by CN focused on [development regulations](#) for uses in close proximity to rail facilities, including residential, recreational, and stormwater management. These comments have been carefully considered and where appropriate, revisions have been incorporated into the final version of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan.

d) Local School Boards

The Halton District School Board and Halton Catholic District School Board have participated on the Technical Advisory Committee since the beginning of the project. Both agencies provided general comments on the draft Secondary Plan focused on pupil accommodation and transportation in the area. Neither agency has requested any modifications to the Secondary Plan through their comments.

e) Halton Hills Departments

Town departments have been part of the Secondary Plan Technical Advisory Committee and have been providing continuous input throughout the project. Additionally, some representatives from these departments have assisted with the planning and undertaking of the Public Open Houses. The comments that have been received from these departments suggested minor modifications to the Secondary Plan, most of which were addressed in the draft Secondary Plan posted ahead of the June 17 Statutory Public Meeting. All comments have since been addressed in the final version of the Secondary Plan, attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

5. Revisions to the Secondary Plan since the Statutory Public Meeting

Following the Statutory Public Meeting on June 17, staff and the project consultant have reviewed all comments received and addressed them where appropriate. These include both public comments and all departmental and agency comments not previously addressed. Below is a summary of the key revisions to the Secondary Plan as a result of the feedback received:

a) Cultural Heritage

To address comments made regarding the representation of cultural heritage in the Secondary Plan, staff are proposing two changes:

- In section H9.4.7 a bullet point will be added noting the St. John's Anglican Cemetery as an area of cultural heritage value or interest.
- Schedule H9-1 Land Use Plan will be modified to have the St. John's Anglican Cemetery added to Special Policy Area 2 Core Area, to better reflect its historical significance. An updated Schedule H9-1 is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.

b) Transportation

In response to comments received from Halton Region staff after the second draft of the Secondary Plan was published online, Town staff have made wording changes in sections H9.4.9.1 (Road Network), and H9.4.9.2 (Active Transportations). These changes are minor and are made to better reflect the regional plans and projects being referenced.

c) Special Policy Area 1 – Stewarttown South

In response to comments received from Halton Region staff after the second draft of the Secondary Plan was published online, Town staff have made wording changes in section H9.7.1. The wording minor change to remove the reference to the future Trafalgar Road reconstruction, for which design work is ongoing, and has not been finalized.

d) Special Policy Area 3 – Expansion Lands

In response to comments received from Halton Region staff after the second draft of the Secondary Plan was published online, Town staff have made wording changes in section H9.7.3.5 (Complete Application Requirements). These changes are minor and are made to better reflect the regional plans and projects being referenced.

Next Steps

Upon approval of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan through Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 57, a copy will be provided to the Province and all relevant public agencies. OPA 57 is exempt from obtaining Provincial approval, and therefore staff will proceed to providing formal Notice of Approval, following which a 20-day appeal period is provided. Any landowner within the Secondary Plan Area, who, prior to adoption, made oral submissions at a public meeting or written submissions to Council has the right to appeal all or part of the Official Plan Amendment.

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 Secondary Plan containing policies to i) facilitate contextually appropriate development in the expansion lands, and ii) preserve the historic community character of Stewarttown. Cultural heritage conservation, and natural heritage protection are also strongly reflected in the draft policies present in this Secondary Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

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

The policies of the Stewarttown Secondary Plan promote energy and water conservation practices. The Town's Green Development Standards will apply to all new development requiring *Planning Act* approvals.

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.
- A drop-in Public Open House was held on June 17, 2024.
- A total of six Steering Committee meetings were held over the life of the project.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

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

Reviewed and approved by,

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning & Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer