



TOWN OF HALTON HILLS OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

Draft Background Report

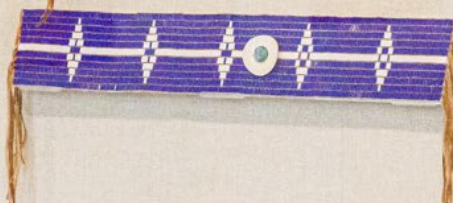
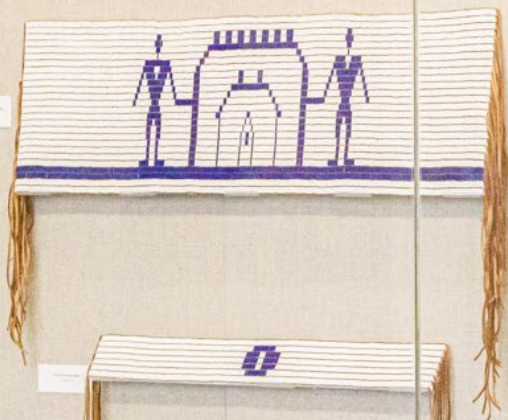
June 16, 2025

Land Acknowledgment

The Town of Halton Hills is located on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit as well as the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee peoples.

Wampum Belts

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FIRST NATION





Executive Summary

The Official Plan is a key policy document for Halton Hills, outlining the vision for the Town and the direction needed to achieve objectives of protecting natural and cultural heritage resources, focusing growth where it makes sense, and addressing issues such as housing affordability and climate change as the Town continues to grow.

With recent provincial changes, including the adoption of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) to replace the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) as a single, streamlined land use planning document for the entire province, the Town is required to update its Official Plan to bring it into conformity and consistency with provincial direction. However, this update also represents an opportunity to (1) integrate work done at the regional and municipal levels (in the form of strategies and plans covering a variety of considerations from transportation to servicing to arts and culture), and (2) address new and emerging planning challenges through innovative policies based on best practices. With Halton Region having lost its planning responsibilities, Halton Hills will also need to decide how it will integrate the Halton Regional Official Plan into its local policy framework.



This Background Report is a key deliverable of Phase 1 of the Official Plan Review (OPR) process, setting the stage for the project by identifying key issues and opportunities to be explored and addressed through a new Official Plan for the Town of Halton Hills:

Section 1 contextualizes the Background Report within the OPR project more broadly.

Section 2 provides a high-level summary of key legislation, policy, strategies, and master plans that will inform key policy changes to the Town's current Official Plan.

Section 3 summarizes key issues and opportunities identified through the review in Section 2 to be explored further and addressed in future phases of the OPR project, organized by theme.

Section 4 goes beyond policy content to identify key guiding principles that will be used to update the structure, formatting, and language of the Official Plan. The goal is to ensure that the final document is both user-friendly to the public and implementable by Town staff.

Please note, this report is not an exhaustive list of all changes being contemplated to the Town's current Official Plan. A public engagement plan will be developed for the project to provide the public, as well as key stakeholders, meaningful opportunities to engage with the OPR process and input into the development of the new official plan, including preliminary recommendations identified in this report.

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Study Purpose

The Town of Halton Hills, in collaboration with a consultant team led by Sajecki Planning, is undertaking an Official Plan Review (OPR) to assess and update the Halton Hills Official Plan.

Official Plans are high-level policy documents that establish the framework for a community's growth, addressing issues such as the protection of natural features, housing needs, parkland allocation, and servicing to support population and employment growth. They also guide the location, design, and overall character of new development.

Under Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, municipalities are required to update their Official Plans on a regular basis to reflect changing provincial and regional legislation and policy. With the last review of the Official Plan occurring in 2010, the current OPR project represents an opportunity to revisit the vision and policies of the Official Plan as it enters its next phase of community building to the year 2051.

Through the current OPR project, the Town of Halton Hills, along with the consultant team, will create a new Official Plan document that (1) conforms to provincial legislation and policy, (2) builds on work completed to date through the Regional Official Plan as well as the myriad of Master Plans and Studies prepared by the Town since the last review, and (3) reflect on the community's vision for the future while considering best practices for addressing emerging planning issues.



1.2 Study Process

The new Official Plan will be developed through a five phase workplan over the span of approximately two years (see *Figure 1*).

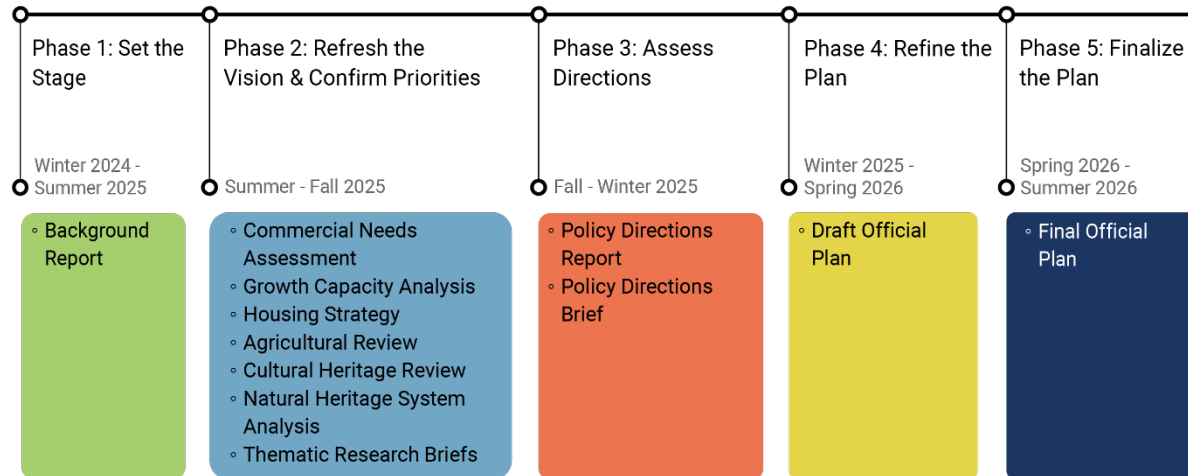


Figure 1: Official Plan Review Project Timeline.

In Phase 1, we will be setting the stage for the OPR project through various engagement opportunities. These sessions will introduce the intent and purpose of the project and discuss the findings from this Background Report as a starting point for future exploration.

Phase 2 will focus on refreshing the community vision and confirming Town priorities through public consultation. In this phase, the consultant team will prepare technical reports that will be summarized into thematic briefs to help guide discussions around a new vision for the Town. This vision will inform priorities that will then be translated into specific Official Plan policies.

In Phase 3, we will assess directions, reviewing work completed and feedback received to date to inform the preparation of a Policy Directions Report. This Report will include a set of policy recommendations to address key issues and themes identified throughout the project process. Further engagement will occur at this stage to confirm priorities and policy directions prior to the drafting of any specific policies. A Special Meeting of Council, per Section 26 of the Planning Act, will be held in Phase 3 providing the public an opportunity to review and comment on potential changes that may be required to the Official Plan.

Phase 4 will focus on drafting and refining the Official Plan, translating policy directions into specific policies and maps. The draft plan will be released for public comment, with targeted engagement involving stakeholders, Indigenous communities, and the broader public to gather feedback on the structure and design of the document as well as any gaps in the policy framework.

Finally, in Phase 5, we will finalize the Official Plan by incorporating feedback received throughout the process. The completed plan will then be presented to Town Council for adoption.

1.3 Purpose

This Background Report is the first major deliverable of the OPR project. It sets the stage for the OPR process by,



Creating an inventory of **provincial legislation and policy** that the new Official Plan will need to conform to/be consistent with;



Reflecting on **regional and municipal policies, strategies, and plans** whose recommendations could be integrated into the Official Plan and translated into policy; and



Identifying any **policy gaps or opportunities** for innovative policies based on best practice to address existing and emerging planning challenges in the Town of Halton Hills.

Key legislative and policy documents are summarized in Section 2: Planning Policy Context. Key considerations for the OPR emerging from this review are presented in Section 3: Key Issues and Opportunities. As the OPR is also an opportunity to revisit the format and structure of the Official Plan (in addition to the content of policy), guiding principles for the new Official Plan document are presented in Section 4: Approach to Updating the Official Plan. Conclusion and next steps are outlined in Section 5: Next Steps.

This Background Report provides the key policy drivers and inputs that will need to be considered in an updated Official Plan. In this way, this report will inform preliminary consultation on the project and will help guide the OPR process, providing preliminary inputs into the Policy Directions Report in Phase 3. Following endorsement of the Background Report by the Town, the consultant team will begin developing technical reports as part of Phase 2 of the project.

1.4 Public Engagement

As part of Phase 1, a Public Engagement Plan (PEP) will be developed to serve as an internal road map for the project team on all engagement efforts.

A summary of public engagement opportunities (key tactics and reporting back methods) is provided below. A variety of communication channels will be used; however, the Let's Talk Halton Hills Official Plan Review project webpage will serve as the "one stop shop" for all engagement updates related to the project.

Table 1: Summary of Public Engagement Opportunities.

	Focus	Public Meetings & Events	Stakeholder Meetings
Phase 1	<i>Project Launch</i> <i>Background Review</i> <i>Establishing the CWG</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open House #1 • Online Survey • Council Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kick-off Meetings with TAC*, CWG** • TAC Meeting #1 • CWG Meeting #1
Phase 2	<i>Visioning</i> <i>Priority Setting</i> <i>Identifying the Issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Contest • Open House #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder Interviews • PLT*** Meeting #1 • TAC Meeting #2 • CWG Meeting #2 • Council Workshop #1
Phase 3	<i>Policy Directions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Meeting of Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLT Meeting #2 • TAC Meeting #3 • CWG Meeting #3 • Council Workshop #2
Phase 4	<i>Draft Official Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open House #3A • Open House #3B • Open House #3C 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLT Meeting #3 • TAC Meeting #4 • CWG Meeting #4 • Council Workshop #3
Phase 5	<i>Final Official Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open House #4 & Statutory Public Meeting • Council Presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLT Meeting #4 • TAC Meeting #2 • CWG Meeting #2

* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): Advisory group comprised of Town, Region, and Commenting Agency staff

** Community Working Group (CWG): A citizen-based group of diverse representatives (such as residents, business owners, youth, community groups +)

*** Project Leadership Team (PLT): Senior-level Town staff who serve as strategic advisors on the project

Key Focus Areas



Section 2: Planning Policy Context

The planning framework in Ontario consists of a multi-layer system of legislation and policy documents at the provincial, regional, and local level that all serve a purpose in either directing, guiding, or informing the Halton Hills OPR (see *Figure 2*). The following section provides a high-level overview of each document identifying key issues, trends, and opportunities relevant to the new Official Plan.



* Official Plans must comply with provincial plans, such as the Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan, be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, and have regard for the Planning Act.

Figure 2: The Planning Policy Framework and Hierarchy in Ontario.

2.1 Provincial

The Province of Ontario sets out the base framework for planning in the province through the *Planning Act* as well as a number of provincial plans. Halton Hills' Official Plan will need to conform to and/or be consistent with the following Provincial legislation and policy documents.

2.1.1 Planning Act

The *Planning Act* is provincial legislation that sets out the rules for land use planning in Ontario. Section 16 of the *Planning Act* requires municipalities to prepare an official plan outlining goals, objectives, and policies to manage and direct physical change and its effects on the social, economic, built, and natural environment of a municipality. Section 26 of the *Planning Act* requires municipalities to update their official plans no less frequently than 10 years after it comes into effect as a new official plan and every 5 years thereafter. The *Planning Act* outlines minimum public consultation requirements for these processes, including a Special Meeting of Council that is open to the public to discuss revisions that may be required, in addition to an open house for the purpose of giving the public an opportunity to review and ask questions about the draft plan (and any supporting information or material).

Although the *Planning Act* identifies specific direction regarding the types of policies and regulations a municipality can and cannot implement (for example, municipalities must allow additional residential units on low-density residential lots and cannot identify minimum unit sizes), the *Planning Act* generally serves to identify the tools at municipalities' disposal subject to the adoption of official plan policies to implement them. These can include site plan control, community improvement plans, inclusionary zoning, and development permit systems. All planning documents and decisions are to have regard for matters of provincial interest outlined in Section 2 of the *Planning Act*.

The Planning Act is periodically amended to reflect new provincial direction. The Halton Hills OPR will need to reflect legislative changes that have been brought forward (or come into effect) since the last office consolidation of the Halton Hills Official Plan, summarized below.

2.1.1.1 Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022

More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) received Royal Assent on November 28, 2022, bringing in a variety of changes relating to fee exemptions for affordable and attainable housing, parameters for the implementation of the recently introduced community benefits charge, restrictions on developments subject to site plan control, and the jurisdiction of conservation authorities. Most of these changes came into effect on the day the Bill received Royal Assent. Others, namely new discounts on community benefits charges and parkland dedication for affordable residential units, came into effect on June 1, 2024. However, some changes have yet to come into effect, specifically as they relate to conveyance of parkland. Prior to Bill 23, there were restrictions on the condition of parkland to be conveyed to a municipality, on which grounds the municipality could refuse the

proposed parkland. Through Bill 23, applicants can propose land to be conveyed as part of parkland conveyance requirements, including lands subject to easements, lands encumbered by below-grade infrastructure, or privately-owned public spaces (POPS). Should the municipality disagree with the proposed parkland, the applicant can appeal the refusal to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

The Halton Hills OPR will need to reflect the revised parameters for parkland dedication in anticipation of the remainder of Bill 23 coming into effect.



2.1.1.2 Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023

Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023 (Bill 97) received Royal Assent on June 8, 2023. In addition to introducing a number of new powers for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (which came into force upon Royal Assent), the most substantive amendment to the *Planning Act* was the introduction of a new definition for 'area of employment' that was implemented on October 20, 2024, with the coming into effect of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. The new definition explicitly removes 'institutional uses' and 'commercial uses' except where they are related to manufacturing, research and development, and warehousing uses.

The Halton Hills OPR will consider the implications of the new definition of area of employment on its existing Employment Areas.

2.1.1.3 Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024

Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024 (Bill 185) received Royal Assent on June 6, 2024, bringing several changes to planning approval processes, appeal rights, as well as

permissible policies and regulations within Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs). Bill 185 reverted mandatory pre-application consultations to an optional process for applicants, and revised definitions for 'public body' and 'specified person', with implications on public notices and appeal rights. It also introduced lapsing provisions on site plan approvals and draft plans of subdivision as well as an exemption for post-secondary institutions from *Planning Act* requirements. It eliminated third-party appeals on official plans and zoning by-laws (including amendments) but permits the registered owner of land to which the plan or by-law would apply to appeal them, if that owner made oral submissions at a public meeting or written submissions to the municipality. It prohibited parking requirements (except bicycle parking) within MTSAs. Most significantly, however, Bill 185 identified July 1, 2024, as the day Halton Region would lose its planning approval authority and the Regional Official Plan would become a Local Plan of Halton Hills.

The Halton Hills OPR will reflect implementation policies consistent with legislated review processes as well as limitations on vehicle parking requirements in MTSAs. The implications of Halton Region losing its approval authority is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.2.1.

2.1.1.4 Bill 162, Get It Done Act, 2024

The Region of Halton's Official Plan was implemented in part through Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 49, which was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on November 4, 2022, subject to a number of modifications. On December 5, 2023, the *Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023* came into effect retroactively reversing a number of ministerial modifications except three. On May 16, 2024, the *Get It Done Act, 2024* (Bill 162), came into effect further revising the list of modifications the approved ROPA is retroactively subject to. A key change enacted through Bill 162 was the inclusion of Premier Gateway Employment Area lands and lands south of 10 Side Road within the Town's urban boundary.

With the Region of Halton losing its approval authority on July 1, 2024, the Regional Plan has become a Local Plan of Halton Hills. The Halton Hills OPR will need to review and address the Regional Official Plan as modified and approved by Bill 162.

2.1.2 Ontario Heritage Act

The *Ontario Heritage Act* provides municipalities and the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism with the power to identify, evaluate, and protect properties having cultural heritage value or interest. Properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* are protected from alteration, demolition, or removal meaning owners are required to receive a permit from the municipality to complete any work that may impact heritage designated properties.

Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* provides for the designation of individual properties, while Part V addresses heritage conservation districts. Municipalities are also permitted to include non-designated properties on their Heritage Register, although listing does not confer the same level of protection as a designated status under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Owners of listed properties must give the municipality 60 days' notice with supporting information before demolishing the property providing the municipality time to consider whether they would like to protect the property from demolition through designation. Properties must be determined to have cultural heritage value or interest (based on standards and guidelines prepared by the Province) and meet criteria outlined in O. Reg. 9/06.



2.1.2.1 Bill 200, Homeowner Protection Act, 2024

The *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* (Bill 23) introduced a two-year timeline for municipalities to either designate or remove listed properties from their Heritage Registers. The *Homeowner Protection Act, 2024* (Bill 200), which received Royal Assent on June 6, 2024, extended this deadline to January 1, 2027, and added a new provision preventing municipalities from re-listing a property for five years after it is removed from a register.

The Town of Halton Hills is currently in the process of reviewing its listed heritage properties for possible designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* consistent with the Council adopted Heritage Designation Strategy.

The Halton Hills OPR will reflect legislative changes including processes and requirements for designation as well as updated terminology and definitions. Heritage considerations are discussed further in Section 2.3.8.

2.1.3 Conservation Authorities Act

Administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CAA) guides conservation, restoration, development and management of Ontario's natural resources in watersheds. It established 36 Conservation Authorities across Ontario to regulate environmental hazards and development activities, including the Halton Region, Credit Valley, and Grand River Conservation Authorities, which have jurisdiction in Halton Hills.

Recent amendments were introduced to the *Conservation Authorities Act* through Bill 139 and Bill 23, reducing the jurisdiction of Conservation Authorities and streamlining the development approvals process to encourage the development of more housing. As of April 1, 2024, individual Conservation Authorities' regulations have been revoked and streamlined into a single regulation (Ontario Regulation 41/24) under the *Conservation Authorities Act* that applies to all 36 of Ontario's Conservation Authorities. Conservation Authorities regulate development in and adjacent to watercourses, valleylands, wetlands, hazardous lands (including unstable soil and bedrock).

Under the amended CAA, individual Conservation Authorities no longer have watershed-specific regulations, although watershed-specific policies remain. Bill 23 also introduced changes to the CAA exempting certain development authorized under the *Planning Act* from requiring a permit, reducing the regulated area around wetlands from 120 metres to 30 meters, and removing the control of 'pollution' and the 'conservation of land' as tests that need to be met to permit development in regulated lands.

The Halton Hills OPR will ensure conformance with the amended CAA and O. Reg. 41/24, and will include consultation with conservation authorities to ensure policies do not conflict with conservation authority regulations.

2.1.4 Provincial Planning Statement

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) 2024 is a provincial policy document that establishes a planning and land use framework applicable across Ontario. The PPS 2024 came into effect on October 20, 2024, replacing both the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019) consolidating them into a single land use policy document. The PPS is issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, which requires all decisions affecting planning matters to be consistent with the PPS. According to PPS 2024, the Official Plan is the main vehicle for implementing provincial policy direction.

Compared to the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), the PPS 2024 introduces the following key policy changes:

- Requires municipalities to plan land use needs for at least 20 years but no more than 30 years (where previously the Growth Plan identified a planning horizon of over 25 years), except when planning for infrastructure, public service facilities, strategic growth areas, and employment areas;
- Requires municipalities to use Ministry of Finance population and employment projections, although municipalities may continue to use projections provided by the Province for the purpose of land use planning;
- Permits consideration for settlement area boundary expansion requests at any time. The Town's decision, or failure to make a decision, on an application can now be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal;
- Emphasizes residential development, specifically promoting the redevelopment of underutilized commercial and institutional lands for housing;
- Encourages municipalities to identify minimum density targets for designated growth areas and to focus development in strategic growth areas (a concept brought forward from the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe);
- Permits municipalities to establish Major Transit Station Areas that may not be on higher order corridors;
- Introduces a new type of strategic growth area in the form of frequent transit corridors, where frequent transit is defined as running at least every 15 minutes in both directions throughout the day and into the evening every day of the week;
- Redefines 'area of employment' to exclude institutional and commercial uses, including retail and office not associated with more traditional employment uses including manufacturing, research and development, and warehousing;
- Opens up more land for residential development by relaxing land use compatibility policies by requiring impacts be minimized and mitigated (whereas impacts were previously required to be avoided) and by no longer requiring proposals for sensitive uses within proximity of areas of employment to demonstrate a need for the use;
- Permits municipalities to consider opportunities to allocate and reallocate, if necessary, unused system capacity of municipal water services and municipal sewage services;
- Requires municipalities to use an agricultural system approach;
- Introduces new definitions for complete communities, additional needs housing, and compact built form;
- Requires planning authorities to engage early with Indigenous communities and ensure their interests are considered when identifying, protecting, and managing cultural heritage resources; and

- Encourages municipalities to coordinate with Service Managers, school boards, and post-secondary institutions to allow for a more integrated approach to dealing with planning for housing and public infrastructure.

The Halton Hills OPR will focus on addressing any explicit conflicts between the Official Plan and PPS 2024 and ensuring the new Official Plan furthers the objectives of the PPS 2024.

2.1.5 Greenbelt Plan

The Greenbelt Plan was established under the *Greenbelt Act*, 2005. It, along with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) and Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), identifies where and how urbanization can occur to provide permanent protection of the province's agricultural land base and ecological and hydrological features within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Greenbelt Plan applies to lands subject to the ORMCP and NEP, and builds upon the ecological protections provided by both plans but defers to each for local implementation of its policies. Within Halton Hills, only the Greenbelt Plan and the NEP apply. Planning matters must conform with the Greenbelt Plan.

Over half of Halton Hills is located within the Greenbelt Plan area, with prime agricultural land identified to the south and east of the Greenbelt and NEP area and rural areas identified to the north and west outside of Acton.

The Greenbelt Plan consists of Protected Countryside and publicly owned lands in urban river valleys. The Protected Countryside is comprised of an agricultural system, a natural system, and a series of settlement areas, each with their own policies but which together serve to enhance the spatial extent of agricultural and environmentally protected lands covered by the ORMCP and NEP while improving linkages between these areas and the surrounding major lake system and watershed.

The *Greenbelt Act* requires a review of the Greenbelt Plan every ten years in coordination with the Niagara Escarpment Plan. Since the last coordinated review began in 2015, the next review is anticipated to begin in 2025. This review will reflect the coming into force of the PPS 2024, and the revoking of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Until then, the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019) will continue to apply where the Greenbelt Plan refers to them to maintain existing protections. The current version of the Greenbelt Plan is the May 16, 2017, office consolidation.

The Halton Hills OPR will ensure that all policies conform to the Greenbelt Plan.

2.1.6 Niagara Escarpment Plan

The NEP, created under the authority of the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*, was originally approved in 1985 to protect Ontario's Niagara Escarpment, which was identified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a world Biosphere Reserve in 1990. The current version came into effect on June 1, 2017, and reflects the October 9, 2024, office consolidation.

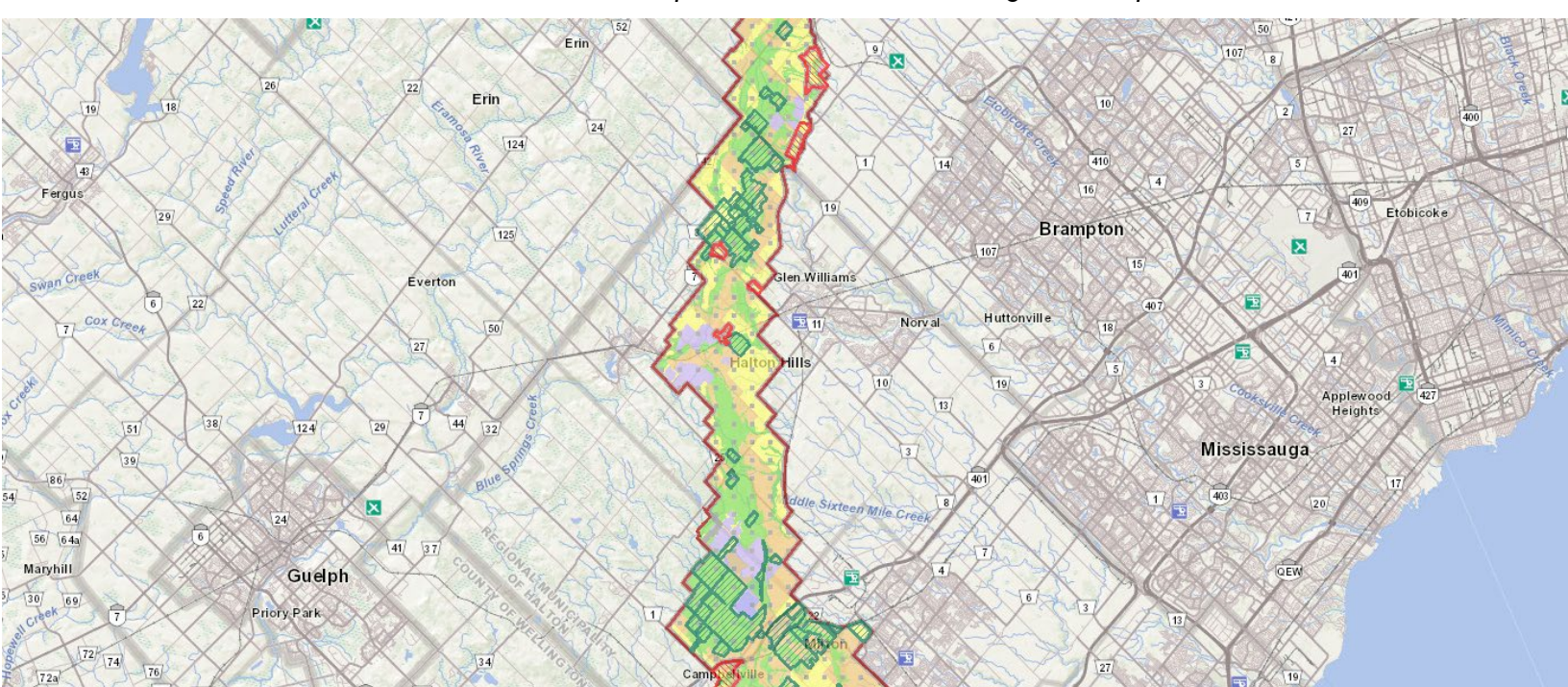
The NEP seeks to protect the geologic feature of the Niagara Escarpment and lands in its vicinity as a continuous natural environment and to ensure that any development that occurs is compatible with that natural environment striking a balance between development, protection, and the enjoyment of the escarpment. To this end, the NEP identifies seven land use designations, each with its own objectives, criteria for designation, permitted uses, lot creation policies, and criteria for development: Escarpment Natural Area, Escarpment Protection Area, Escarpment Rural Area, Minor Urban Centre, Urban Area, Escarpment Recreation Area, and Mineral Resource Extraction Area. All land use designations except Escarpment Recreation Area and Urban Area are found within Halton Hills.

The NEP also outlines a system of parks and open spaces that are connected by the Bruce Trail (Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System – NEPOSS). Two Natural Environments (Terra Cotta Conservation Area, Scotsdale Farm) and one Nature Reserve (Silver Creek Conservation Area) constituting part of the NEPOSS are located within Halton Hills.

As the NEP is located within the Greenbelt Plan, the Greenbelt Plan provides that the policies of the NEP are the policies of the Greenbelt Plan within the NEP Area. The Protected Countryside policies of the Greenbelt Plan do not apply with the exception of Section 3.3 (Parkland, Open Space, and Trails).

The *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act* requires a review of the NEP every ten years in coordination with the Greenbelt Plan. Since the last coordinated review began in 2015, the next review is anticipated to begin in 2025.

The Halton Hills OPR will ensure that all policies conform to the Niagara Escarpment Plan.



2.1.7 Source Protection Plans

Mandated by the *Clean Water Act*, 2006 (and O. Reg. 287/07), source protection plans outline policies to protect municipal sources of drinking water from contamination and overuse. The *Clean Water Act*, 2006 identifies 22 activities that pose threats to the quality and quantity of drinking water sources, including the application of pesticides, the storage of snow, the storage of fuel, or the taking of water if not returned to a drinking water source. The intent of source protection plans is to ensure that activities that pose significant threats to municipal drinking water sources cease to exist or never become significant.

Halton Hills is largely subject to two Source Protection Plans, the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Plan and the Credit Valley, Toronto and Region, Central Lake Ontario Source Protection Plan. A small portion of the municipality is also located within the Lake Erie Source Protection Region. Each Plan includes Assessment Reports containing detailed descriptions and evaluations of the Areas' watersheds and the associated activities that pose significant threats. All planning decisions must conform to the significant threat policies of the Source Protection Plans.

The Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Plan (Version 4.1) was approved on November 18, 2022. The Credit Valley, Toronto and Region, Central Lake Ontario Source Protection Plan (Version 6.0) came into effect on March 6, 2024.

The Halton Hills OPR will conform with Source Protection Plan policies.

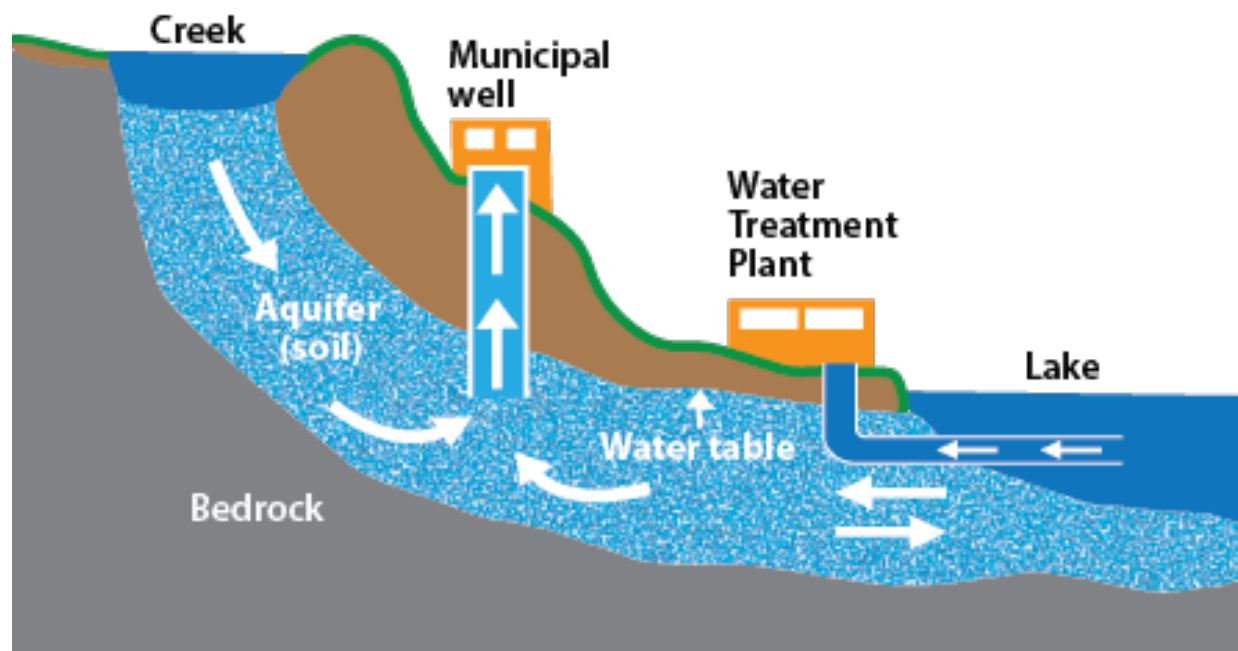


Figure 3: Sources of drinking water (Source: Halton Region)

2.1.8 The Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Document

The PPS 2024 requires that new lands, including the creation of lots and new or expanded facilities, comply with Minimum Separation Distance (MDS) formulae and guidelines to minimize land use conflicts and nuisance complaints related to odour. The Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Document: Formulae and Guidelines for Livestock Facility and Anaerobic Digester Odour Setbacks provides setback guidelines for proposed new development in the vicinity of existing livestock barns, manure storages, and/or anaerobic digesters (MDS I), as well as for proposed new or altered livestock facilities and/or anaerobic digester in the vicinity of existing or approved development (MDS II).

The Halton Hills OPR will comply with MDS formulae and guidelines in determining permitted uses in agricultural and rural areas.

2.1.9 Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas

Prime agricultural areas support local food production as well as agri-food exports in the Province of Ontario. The PPS 2024 permits a range of uses in Ontario's prime agricultural areas, including agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, and on-farm diversified uses. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (now the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness) released guidelines (Publication 851) to help municipalities interpret PPS policies on permitted uses. Although the guidelines were originally prepared to implement the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), PPS 2024 is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) as it relates to maintaining the land base for agriculture. The guidelines also speak to 'limited non-agricultural uses' permitted in prime agricultural areas to ensure the continued thriving of agricultural industry and rural economy.

The Halton Hills OPR will follow provincial guidelines in identifying policies and permitting uses in Ontario's prime agricultural areas.



2.1.10 Natural Heritage Reference Manual

The Natural Heritage Reference Guide provides technical guidance on implementing the natural heritage policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (2020). Although the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) has replaced the previous Provincial Policy Statement (2020), many of the natural heritage policies remain the same. The manual remains an important reference tool for municipalities and other planning authorities in the development of natural heritage mapping and policies. The manual outlines the components of a natural heritage system (including core areas and linkages) and defines 'significance' and 'adjacent lands' to inform the protection of identified natural features. Finally, the manual provides identification and evaluation procedures for a variety of natural heritage features and areas identified in provincial policy. The manual works with such tools as the Significant Wildlife Habitat Guide and the Significant Wildlife Habitation Mitigation Tool to support municipalities in assessing wildlife habitat significance and identifying mitigation measures to limit the impact of development on wildlife habitat.

The Halton Hills OPR will consider the Natural Heritage Reference Manual (and associated tools) in the development of natural heritage mapping and policies.



2.1.11 Metrolinx 2041 Regional Transportation Plan

The 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) was adopted in 2018, replacing the Big Move, the Greater Toronto Area's first long-range transportation plan released in 2008. The 2041 RTP represents a blueprint for creating an integrated, multi-modal regional transportation system that is aligned with the former Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, outlining transportation policies for the region, including Halton Hills. A major focus of the 2041 RTP is the development of the GO Expansion (previously GO Regional Express Rail), transforming GO from a commuter-focused service into one that offers frequent two-way, all-day service.

As part of GO Expansion, Metrolinx is implementing two-way all-day service along the Kitchener Line. Today, the Kitchener Line between Kitchener GO and Georgetown GO consists of a single active track, where GO trains share space with freight traffic. Although most improvements are focused around the Guelph GO Station, future phases of the Kitchener Extension will include a passing track at Acton GO Station. The 2041 RTP also includes consideration for a Regional Express Bus Network, with a proposed Regional Express Bus along Highway 401 and a proposed Frequent Regional Express Bus along Highway 7 and Trafalgar Road.

Metrolinx is currently updating the RTP to extend the long-term vision for the region's integrated transit network through 2051. These updates will align the RTP with the Province's 2022 multimodal plan, Connecting the GGH: A Transportation Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Section 2.1.11).

The Halton Hills OPR will consider planned transit infrastructure and service improvements in new transportation network mapping and policies.



2.1.12 Connecting the GGH: A Transportation Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Released by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation in February 2022, the Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan to 2051 is a 30-year vision for enhanced mobility within and across the Greater Golden Horseshoe and Ontario as a whole. The Vision for Mobility to 2051 is organized around four themes: fighting gridlock and improving road performance, getting people moving on a connected transit system, supporting a more sustainable and resilient region, and efficiently moving goods.

To address gridlock, the Plan identifies new transportation infrastructure including Highway 413, a proposed highway and transit corridor connecting Highway 400 to the 401/407 ETR interchange running through York, Peel, and Halton Regions and the Highway 401 Expansion Project, which is approximately 18 km long and extends from the Credit River in

Mississauga to Regional Road 25 in Milton. The Plan also aims to transform the current radial regional transit system focused on Union Station in Toronto into one that allows people to travel across the region by transit, highlighting a number of Metrolinx initiatives including the GO Expansion. The Plan also includes a Strategic Goods Movement Network that identifies key corridors, facilities, and connections for supporting freight movement across the region.

The Halton Hills OPR will consider planned transportation infrastructure in new transportation network mapping and policies.



2.2 Regional

Halton Hills is a lower-tier municipality within the Region of Halton. Up until recently, this meant that Halton Hills' Official Plan was required to conform to the policies of Halton's Regional Official Plan. As mentioned in Section 2.1.1.3, Halton Region lost its approval authority on July 1, 2024, meaning the Regional Official Plan is now a Local Plan for the Town of Halton Hills. The OPR will need to carefully consider how to implement the Regional Official Plan in the local context.

2.2.1 Halton Region Official Plan

Starting in 2014, Halton Region began the latest review of the Regional Plan to bring it into conformity with provincial policy and plans and to establish a growth management strategy for Halton Region to the year 2051. Regional Council adopted two Regional Official Plan Amendments (ROPA) implementing work on the conformity review: ROPA 48, which introduced a new Regional Urban Structure providing a structure and hierarchy for the direction of population and employment growth (approved by the Province with modifications on November 10, 2021), and ROPA 49, which introduced policies to implement the growth strategy, including the delineation of MTSAs (approved by the Province with modifications on November 4, 2022). With the passing of Bill 23, which identified Halton Region as an upper-tier municipality that would be losing its approval

authority, work on ROPA 50, which included mapping of a new regional natural heritage system and updating natural heritage and agricultural policies, was halted with the intent that local municipalities would complete this work as part of their local official plan reviews.

As of July 1, 2024, the Regional Official Plan has become a Local Plan of Halton Hills. The Halton Hills OPR will include a detailed review of the Regional Official Plan, and work completed in support of draft ROPA 50, to determine which policies (and mapping) will be integrated into the new Official Plan, which will be revised, and which will not be brought forward. The Halton Hills OPR will additionally consider existing natural heritage system-related implementation documents and determine where more locally-specific documents may be required to implement new Official Plan policies.

2.2.2 Comprehensive Housing Strategy 2014-2024

Under the *Housing Services Act*, 2011, Halton Region is required to have a 10-year housing and homelessness plan to address local housing issues. Halton's Comprehensive Housing Strategy (CHS) Update: 2014-2024, which was approved in November 2013, serves as the Region's 10-year housing and homelessness plan. Updated in 2019, the CHS includes five strategic directions (each with actions to implement them) spanning the extent of the housing continuum from emergency housing services to affordable/market rental housing and home ownership. Specific Actions include,

- Working with municipalities to develop, implement, and promote land use policies and initiatives to meet the changing housing and service needs of residents, and
- Partnering with Local Municipalities to prepare Community Improvement Plans that support increased supply of assisted, affordable, or special needs housing.

Halton Region is in the process of updating its plan for the 2025-2035 time period. Through Bill 23, the role of the Region in housing has been limited to only the government-assisted segment of the housing continuum (including emergency shelters and supports, supportive housing, and community housing), which will be reflected in the updated plan.

The Halton Hills OPR will consider policies, and other non-policy tools, to support the full range of housing to meet the needs of residents.

2.2.3 Sustainable Halton Water & Wastewater Master Plan

In 2011, Halton Region prepared a water and wastewater master plan, providing a Region-wide review of existing water and wastewater servicing to inform the development of servicing strategies for all urban areas to the year 2031. The review included the Halton Hills 401 Corridor as well as urban systems in Georgetown and Acton, including hamlets of Stewarttown, Norval, and Glen Williams. The Master Plan identified existing capacity and necessary upgrades to meet the servicing needs of anticipated urban population and employment growth.

Halton Region is currently preparing an Integrated Master Plan to address Regional water, wastewater, and transportation systems (including active transportation) to the year 2051, which will be used to inform servicing and development phasing as part of the Halton Hills OPR.

2.2.4 Transportation Master Plan to 2031 – The Road to Change

Completed in 2011, the Transportation Master Plan to 2031 – The Road to Change, provides strategies, policies and tools for the development of a multi-modal transportation system for the Region consistent with the objectives of Sustainable Halton and meeting the Region's infrastructure needs to 2031. In addition to identifying necessary infrastructure upgrades, the Road to Change also identifies ways to encourage people to change their travel behaviours to maximize the use of transit as a viable alternative to single-occupancy vehicles.

The Road to Change outlines five key recommendation areas:

- Active Transportation
- Transportation Demand Management
- Goods Movement
- Intra-Regional Transit
- Roadway Improvements

Halton Region is currently preparing an Integrated Master Plan to address regional water, wastewater, and transportation systems (including active transportation) to the year 2051, which will be used to inform policies to support the regional transportation system as part of the Halton Hills OPR.



2.2.5 Active Transportation Master Plan

The Halton Region Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP) was completed in 2015 building off the vision of the Halton Region Transportation Master Plan (2031) – The Road to Change. The ATMP outlines the strategy, infrastructure, initiatives, and programs required to create an active transportation plan that is safe, affordable, and sustainable. The Plan focuses on enhancing connectivity for the two most common forms of active transportation, cycling and walking, which are targeted to represent 5% of all peak hour trips by 2031.

The implementation strategy integrates active transportation into road projects through three approaches: incorporating facilities into the Road Capital Program, adding paved shoulders and other infrastructure in the Road Resurfacing Program, and executing stand-alone projects to establish key connections not covered by other initiatives.

Halton Region is currently preparing an Integrated Master Plan to address regional water, wastewater, and transportation systems (including active transportation) to the year 2051, which will be used to inform the planning of active transportation infrastructure as part of the Halton Hills OPR.

2.3 Local

2.3.1 Strategic Plan 2023-2026

The Town's Strategic Plan outlines Council's priorities to the year 2026, informing planning and budgeting decisions over the course of their term. The Strategic Plan outlines a vision for Halton Hills that the strategies and objectives in the Plan seek to create – a growing, nature-rich community that is proud of its small-town feel and urban rural mix where all people feel welcomed, safe, and connected. Key priorities include building a thriving economy, protecting natural areas and heritage, managing infrastructure and assets, and creating safe and welcoming communities (see *Figure 3*). The Plan is based on a number of values including integrity and honesty, transparency and accessibility, effective stewardship, connection, respect and care.

The Halton Hills OPR will represent the priorities and values of the Strategic Plan.



Figure 4: Strategic objectives (Source: Town of Halton Hills Strategic Plan 2023-2026).

2.3.2 Official Plan

The Official Plan is Halton Hills' primary policy document, providing a framework for all land use decisions in the municipality. The Official Plan document is structured into three Parts: Part I outlines the preamble; Part II includes the Official Plan itself comprised of text and schedules and constitutes the operative part of the document; while Part III constitutes appendices that provide additional information to assist in the implementation of the

Official Plan including urban design guidelines. Part II is further broken down into eight parts, A through H.

Part A outlines the vision, goals, and strategic objectives of the Official Plan. Key goals cover a range of issues:

- Natural Heritage and Water Resources: To protect, enhance and where possible restore, significant natural heritage features and related ecological functions in the Town for present and future generations.
- Growth: To direct most forms of development to urban areas where full wastewater and water services are available and to support the efficient use of land in these areas.
- Urban Character: To protect and enhance the character of existing urban areas and to maintain them as diverse, livable, safe, thriving and attractive communities.
- Rural Character: To protect, maintain and enhance the open space character of lands outside of the Urban Areas and the Hamlet Areas for enjoyment by present and future generations.
- Agriculture: To preserve areas demonstrating high capacity for agricultural production for that purpose.
- Cultural Heritage: To identify, conserve and enhance the Town's cultural heritage resources and promote their value and benefit to the community.
- Economic Development: To provide opportunities for economic development in a manner that fosters competitiveness and a positive business environment.
- Infrastructure: To provide infrastructure that meets the needs of present and future residents and businesses in an efficient, environmentally-sensitive, cost effective and timely manner.
- Housing: To provide an adequate housing supply and range of housing choices to meet the needs of present and future residents.
- Mineral Aggregate Resources: To protect mineral aggregate resources for long term use while ensuring that extraction occurs in a manner that minimizes environmental and social impacts.
- Sustainable Community Development: To promote community development in a manner that is sustainable for present and future generations.

Land uses are divided into three broad categories: Environmental and Open Space Areas (Part B), which applies to lands that are considered to be significant from a natural heritage and/or open space perspective; Urban Areas (Part D), which applies to Georgetown, Acton, and Premier Gateway Employment Area, as well as the Mansewood Employment Area; and Agricultural/Rural Areas (Part E), which applies to lands outside the Urban Area excluding

the Environmental and Open Space Area. Each part outlines a number of land use designations with a variety of policies that generally address objectives, location, permitted uses, implementing zoning, and special policy areas. Some designations may include use-specific policies or other policies relating to infill development, housing, urban design, intensification targets, infrastructure, and employment land conversions.

Part C outlines policies dealing with watercourses, natural hazards, watershed planning, and surface and groundwater resources throughout the Town. Policies also outline requirements for studies and reports related to stormwater management, environmental impact, tree preservation, contaminated sites, land use compatibility, noise and vibration impacts, energy conservation, and soil management.

Part F provides general development policies addressing subdivision of land, urban design, cultural heritage resources, transportation, parkland community facilities, servicing, public uses, and development phasing.

Part G describes how the vision, goals, objectives, and policies of the Official Plan will be implemented through interpretation policies, planning tools available to the town, development application process, and a glossary of terms.

Finally, Part H includes Secondary Plans, including the Norval Secondary Plan, Georgetown GO Station Area Secondary Plan, Glen Williams Secondary Plan, Premier Gateway Employment Area Phase 1B Secondary Plan, Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan, and Downtown Georgetown Secondary Plan.

The in-effect Official Plan was approved in 2008, repealing and replacing the Town of Halton Hills Official Plan adopted by Town Council in 1982 with the last major review occurring in 2010. The current office consolidation is dated April 30, 2024.

The Halton Hills OPR will revisit the structure, format, and content of the Halton Hills Official Plan to ensure conformity with provincial legislative and policy direction, to integrate recommendations from regional and municipal policies and plans, to incorporate best practices in addressing existing and new planning changes, and to present policies in a way that is easy to read.

2.3.2.1 Unconsolidated Official Plan Amendments

There are a number of official plan amendments that have been adopted but are not reflected in the current office consolidation of the Official Plan. A summary of these official plan amendments is provided in the table below.

OPA	Title	Purpose	Status
44	Glen Williams Secondary Plan Review	To protect and preserve the natural and cultural heritage features of the Glen Williams Hamlet and to guide change that maintains and enhances the unique character and natural environment of the Hamlet.	Recently settled at the Ontario Land Tribunal
50	Premier Gateway Phase 2B Employment Area Secondary Plan	To establish a Secondary Plan for the Premier Gateway Phase 2B Employment lands with appropriate land use designations and policies to facilitate the development of these lands for employment purposes.	Under appeal
57	Stewarttown Secondary Plan	To establish a Secondary Plan for the former Hamlet of Stewarttown and adjacent expansion lands. The Secondary Plan includes the appropriate land use designations and policies that facilitate the development of the expansion lands for residential and associated uses, while respecting the existing community character.	Under appeal
58	Additional Residential Units (Town-Wide)	To update current policies for accessory apartments within the Town's Official Plan. Proposed changes include adopting the term Additional Residential Units (ARU), in place of Accessory Apartments, to better align with provincial planning policies (see <i>Figure 5</i>). Additionally, an update to the definition of the use is required to include units detached from the main residential building.	In effect
59	Southeast Georgetown Secondary Plan	To establish a Secondary Plan for approximately 53 hectares (131 acres) of land in Southeast Georgetown. The Secondary Plan identifies the most appropriate mix of land uses, establishing a vision for the area of balancing the need for economic environmental, and social sustainability.	Adopted

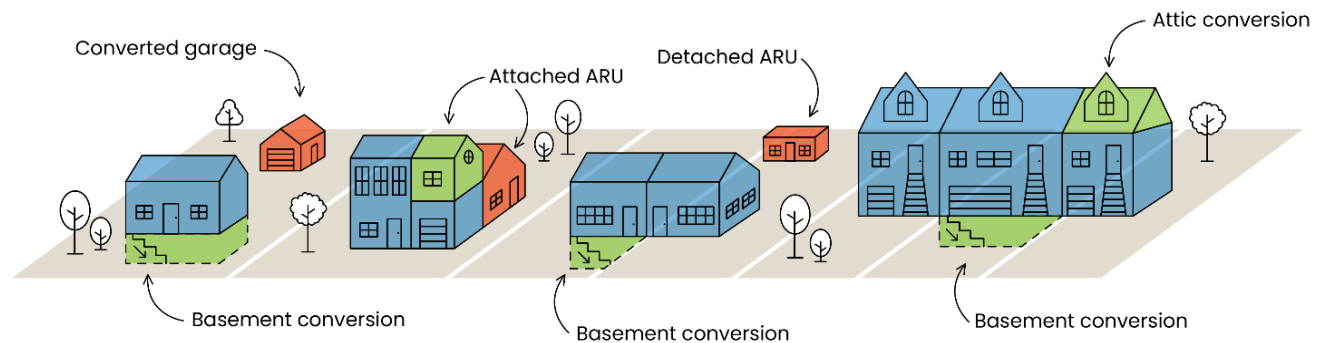


Figure 5. Illustration of different types of Additional Residential Units (ARUs).

The Town is also working on developing a secondary plan for the Southeast Georgetown area as well as reviewing the Georgetown GO Station Area/Mill Street Corridor Secondary Plan.

The Halton Hills OPR will integrate unconsolidated official plan amendments (as well as site-specific official plan amendments approved by Town Council or the Ontario Land Tribunal) that have been adopted or approved since the last office consolidation of the Official Plan.



2.3.3 Growth Management

2.3.3.1 Intensification Opportunities Study

Building off work completed as part of the 2010 Intensification Opportunity Study, the Town of Halton Hills retained SvN in 2017 to develop and update policies for intensification in the urban areas of Acton and Georgetown outside of the Mature Neighbourhoods. The Study included an intensification inventory, which determined intensification potential for a

number of vacant, underutilized, and potential redevelopment sites; transportation and servicing assessment to understand infrastructure needs to support intensification; and a market assessment to determine the likelihood and timing of development. The study identified, subject to future study, sufficient servicing and transportation infrastructure to support the contemplated level of intensification determined as part of this study, while the market assessment noted that unit potential between Acton and Georgetown may exceed the intensification target identified for Acton and Georgetown in the Regional Official Plan. The study also involved the development of Infill Design Guidelines to ensure future infill meets urban design best practices.

As part of the Halton Hills OPR, NBLC, in collaboration with Tate Research and Sajecki Planning Inc., will complete a Growth Capacity Analysis that will determine appropriate intensification and greenfield density targets. This assessment will be used to corroborate growth projections and land budgets previously prepared for the Town through the Region's Official Plan Review.

2.3.3.2 Employment Land Needs Assessment

In 2020, Watson & Associates completed an Employment Land Needs Assessment to provide a comprehensive review of the Town's designated employment lands as well as future regional/local economic and development trends. The purpose of this review was to ensure an adequate supply of non-residential lands to accommodate the Town's long-term employment needs and objectives. Key considerations outlined in the study included the structure, quality, and 'readiness' of the Town's employment lands.



Forecasted demand on employment lands is anticipated across a range of traditional industrial sectors as well as more knowledge-based sectors pointing to the need to ensure the Town's employment lands are able to reflect a diversity of industry and business needs

over the long-term. Although the Town's proposed MTSA's in Acton and Georgetown are anticipated to accommodate a modest amount of employment growth, the demand for standalone, multi-tenant office space is anticipated to primarily be accommodated within Employment Areas. Consideration should be made in the long-term for providing transit access to these areas to allow workers to use non-automobile modes of transportation.

The Halton Hills OPR will consider land needs identified by Watson & Associates to accommodate employment growth to the year 2051, recognizing the new Planning Act definition of 'Area of Employment'. The OPR will focus on protecting lands suited for traditional industrial sectors while supporting the rise of more knowledge-based sectors in strategic locations within Halton Hills.

2.3.3.3 Retail Commercial Demand Study

In 2010, W. Scott Morgan & Associates updated the Town's 2001 Retail Commercial Demand Study to determine any retail commercial needs associated with anticipated population growth in Georgetown and Acton to the year 2031. It was determined that about 60 acres of commercial land (at 25% coverage) would be needed to support the 20,000 people planned for Southwest Georgetown (and two smaller areas including Southeast Georgetown and Stewarttown) as part of the previous Regional Official Plan update. The Study did not identify any additional commercial land needs within Acton, pointing to infilling, intensification, and redevelopment as opportunities to address projected growth there.

In 2016, the Commercial Retail Demand Study was updated as part of the Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan, specifically looking at Georgetown this time, to reflect revised Best Planning Estimates from Halton Region. The revised study identified a reduced need of 40 acres of commercial land (at 30% coverage), which translates to one community shopping centre, two neighbourhood shopping centres, and three convenience/mixed use



centres along with some vacancy uptake, intensification, and conversion of non-commercial uses to retail commercial anticipated throughout Georgetown.

As part of the Halton Hills OPR, Tate Research will complete a new Town-wide commercial needs assessment to examine the current market context and anticipated demands for commercial floorspace in the Town of Halton Hills until the year 2051.

2.3.3.4 Rural Policy and Zoning Review

The Town began undertaking a Rural Policy and Zoning Review in 2017 to identify revisions required for the Town's Official Plan and Zoning By-law based on changes to the Regional Official Plan (ROPA 38), which was adopted by Halton Region in 2009. The purpose of this Review was the protection of the Town's Natural Heritage System, Agricultural System and mineral aggregate resources from the impacts of potential development. The Review was put on hold when Halton Region initiated its Official Plan Review. As part of this process, Halton Region was to update its rural and natural heritage system policies. However, with the passing of Bill 23, work on ROPA 50, which included updates to agricultural policies, was halted.

The Halton Hills OPR will identify necessary changes to existing rural and agricultural policies based on provincial policy direction. This includes reviewing draft policy directions developed as part of the Halton Region OPR as well as engaging with the farming community and Agricultural Roundtable (Section 2.3.3.5) to ensure policies reflect the needs of the agricultural community in Halton Hills.

2.3.3.5 Agricultural Roundtable

In 2024, the Town of Halton Hills established the Agricultural Roundtable, an advisory group to provide an owner/operator perspective and two-way dialogue on matters that influence the viability of agricultural operations in Halton Hills. The Agricultural Roundtable provides a forum for discussion of local agricultural policy matters such as,

- Enhancing the economic viability of agricultural operations;
- Agricultural diversification, including agri-tourism opportunities;
- Economic development opportunities related to the growth of the food and beverage sector;
- Environmental matters, including environmental stewardship, Natural Heritage System (NHS), and implementation of innovative farming practices;
- Infrastructure and operations (e.g. transportation, water, site alteration and soil movement, runoff and drainage, enforcement and illegal uses, zoning, planning.); and
- Local, regional and/or provincial legislation, policies and economic conditions, and advocacy.

The first meeting of the Agricultural Roundtable was held in November 2024.

The Halton Hills OPR will include consultation with the Agricultural Roundtable on proposed agricultural policies and mapping to ensure ongoing viability, and enhancement, of agricultural operations. This engagement will include reviewing the natural heritage policies and mapping to ensure alignment between agriculture and natural heritage.



2.3.4 Transportation

2.3.4.1 Transportation Master Plan

Prepared in 2011, the Halton Hills Transportation Master Plan (TMP) outlines strategies to meet the Town's transportation needs to the year 2031 with the aim of creating a transportation system that is sustainable, integrated, and encourages a healthy and active lifestyle. The Plan proposes road network improvements, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure expansion, and public transit enhancements, including potential municipal transit services. The goals of the TMP include addressing existing transportation challenges; identifying required policies, programs, and investment to support planned growth and development; identifying opportunities to encourage active transportation; and providing a transportation system that offers travel choices while balancing the needs of all users. To achieve these goals, the TMP recommends implementing travel demand management; implementing an active transportation network that connects people to major areas of activity and employment; considering opportunities for municipal transit; encouraging the use and expansion of specialized transit services for individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and youth; and supporting the efficient and reliable movement of goods with minimal impacts on residential communities. The TMP also aligns with regional and provincial transportation initiatives to create a more connected and efficient transportation network in Halton Hills.

The Town is in the process of developing a Mobility Master Plan as an update to the Transportation Master Plan. As the two studies are being undertaken in parallel, the Halton Hills OPR will coordinate with the Mobility Master Plan team to ensure transportation policies reflect and are informed by Master Plan recommendations and vice versa.

2.3.4.2 Transit Service Strategy

In 2019, WSP prepared a Transit Service Strategy to assess the feasibility of introducing expanded transit services in Halton Hills. Halton Hills is significantly car-oriented. At the time of the study, transit options in Halton Hills were limited to on-demand ActiVan specialized transit service (providing curb-to-curb services for those with disabilities, the elderly, and youth) and Regional GO Transit services. The study sought to explore a made-in-Halton Hills transit solution that is affordable, accessible, and tailored to needs and opportunities in Halton Hills. The Transit Service Strategy outlined phased service improvements including,

- Establishing a Universal Access Service, providing curb-to-curb service to all residents throughout Halton Hills and key destinations outside Halton Hills (Lisgar, Milton, and Mount Pleasant GO stations);
- Establishing a limited fixed-route transit system with lines going between Milton GO, Toronto Premium Outlets, and Lisgar GO; between Georgetown Hospital and Mt. Pleasant GO Station; and between Georgetown GO and Toronto Premium Outlets; and
- (Eventually) expanding the fixed-route transit system to additional destinations and neighbourhoods as demand grows.

Currently, municipal bus service is offered between Milton GO Station and Lisgar GO Station in Mississauga via Steeles Avenue. As demand for the Universal Access Service grows, service standards would trigger implementation of fixed-route bus services to replace Universal Access Service on the most heavily used travel routes. The Town will monitor the efficiency and productivity of the Universal Access Service using key performance indicators.

The Halton Hills OPR will integrate proposed transit lines as part of a broader transportation network and consider policies supporting transit-oriented development.

2.3.4.3 Trucking Strategy

In 2019, a Trucking Strategy study was completed to develop long-term strategies for the safe and efficient movement of trucks through Halton Hills while respecting the road maintenance and safety needs of the Town. Consultation completed as part of the study identified concerns around safety, noise and vibration impacts, air quality impacts, and congestion. Key recommendations emerging from the study included ongoing engagement (with a proposed Trucking Advisory Committee as well as the regional, provincial, and federal governments), public education, adoption of a 'preferred truck route network', evaluation of truck bypass options on new and existing corridors, expanded safety

inspections and enforcement at the northeast corner of Highway 7 and Sixth Line, and streamlined special permit review processes.

The Halton Hills OPR will consider policies to support the efficient movement of goods, while addressing road maintenance and safety concerns, including integrating a preferred truck route into a broader transportation network.



2.3.4.4 Active Transportation Master Plan

The Town completed an Active Transportation Master Plan in 2020 to accompany and expand upon recommendations set out in the Town's Transportation Master Plan specifically as they relate to active transportation programs and policies. Although Halton Hills is largely autocentric today, the Town has significant potential to increase the portion of trips made using active transportation. To achieve its vision of establishing an environment that provides equitable, self-propelled transportation operations and experiences for people of all ages and abilities, the Master Plan developed a network of existing and proposed on-road and off-road improvements, including in-boulevard multi-use paths, buffered paved shoulders, paved shoulders, cycle tracks, buffered bike lanes, bike lanes, signed bike routes, urban shoulders, bicycle-friendly corridors, and trails. The Plan also identifies a number of Official Plan policy recommendations, including integrating the Active Transportation Master Plan vision and objectives into guiding principles, adopting

the active transportation network as a schedule in the Official Plan, and considering the role of land use in encouraging recreational and commuting trips.

The Halton Hills OPR will integrate the active transportation network into a broader transportation network for the Town and will include policies to support active transportation.

2.3.4.5 Specialized Transit Plan

In 2021, Left Turn Right Turn prepared a Specialized Transit Plan for the Town to support and enhance the broader Halton Hills Transit Service Strategy. The Specialized Transit Plan focuses on the ActiVan service and was driven by the need to evaluate service delivery models, improve service efficiency and customer experience, and to prepare for changes resulting from the implementation of a Universal Access Service (see Section 2.3.4.2). At the time of the study, the long-time partner and operator of ActiVan was discontinuing operations. As such, the study evaluated several service delivery models and recommended the Town bring the service in-house with a number of other operations-focused recommendations.

The Halton Hills OPR will recognize the central position of ActiVan in the Town's transit system.

2.3.4.6 Eighth Line EA

In July 2023, R.J. Burnside & Associates undertook a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment on behalf of the Town to determine the needs of transportation corridor improvement along Eighth Line from Steeles Avenue to Maple Avenue to support future growth. It was identified that the existing configuration of Eighth Line will not be able to accommodate future traffic demands due to growth and improvements are required to provide sufficient capacity, improve safety, and accommodate future transit.

The study explored a number of alternatives, including road improvements, road widening, transportation demand management, and active transportation. The preferred concept presented in the study includes proposed design criteria, cross-sections, active transportation elements, as well as grading requirements, considerations for utilities and services, and property requirements.

The Halton Hills OPR will reflect planned infrastructure improvements along Eighth Line as part of the Town's road network. Other Environmental Assessments that will be considered include regional transportation projects including future improvements to Winston Churchill Boulevard, the Norval West Bypass and 10 Side Road corridors, Trafalgar Road, and the New North Regional Road.

2.3.5 Servicing

2.3.5.1 Stormwater Master Plan

AECOM just recently completed a Stormwater Master Plan for the Town in July 2024. The study evaluated how the existing stormwater network is functioning, identified vulnerabilities, and provided recommendations to inform short- and long-range planning to

improve the Town's stormwater infrastructure. The overall objectives of the Stormwater Master Plan were to decrease the likelihood of flooding that would result in property damage or safety issues, minimize the impacts of erosion on aquatic and terrestrial habitats and property, build resiliency against and adapt to the impacts of climate change, mitigate historic problem drainage areas, seek opportunities to improve stormwater management planning practices, and seek opportunities to improve water quality. A total of 140 project areas were identified based on the occurrence of performance issues, of which 43 had critical problems. The Plan includes a stormwater implementation plan with recommendations on financing options, development standards, and monitoring. The study also recommended low impact development as a water quality mitigation measure in catchments where stormwater ponds do not currently exist.

The Halton Hills OPR will consider the capacity of existing infrastructure in the planning and phasing of future growth and will explore policy opportunities to encourage the use of low impact development as part of new developments taking into consideration CLI-ECA requirements and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks' Draft Low Impact Development Stormwater Management Guidance Manual.

2.3.5.2 Fire Master Plan

In 2024, Pomax Consulting prepared a Fire Master Plan for the Town. The purpose of the Plan was to provide a systematic and comprehensive approach to identifying fire and life safety risks in the community, evaluate the delivery of fire protection services in Halton Hills, recommend the establishment of strategic priorities for the Fire Department, and optimize fire protection services to the community as the Town of Halton Hills continues to grow. The Master Plan identified a number of staffing and operations-based recommendations.

As part of the Halton Hills OPR, the Fire Department will be consulted to ensure that proposed policies do not negatively impact the provision of fire protection services to the Town.

2.3.6 Environment

2.3.6.1 Climate Change Adaptation Plan

Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) 2020, was prepared by the Canadian Urban Institute to minimize and mitigate impacts of climate change and increase the Town's climate resiliency. The five key goals of the Plan include:

- Halton Hills can Withstand Extreme Weather Events
- Halton Hills is Resilient to the Impacts of Higher Temperatures and More Frequent Heat Waves.
- Halton Hills is Resilient to Increased Precipitation and Flooding
- Halton Hills is Prepared for the Socio-Economic Impacts of Climate Change
- Halton Hills Can Protect Residents from the Health and Safety Impacts of Climate Change

The Climate Change Adaptation Plan was informed by three technical studies: a Key Climate Indicators for Halton Hills (which assessed potential climate change impacts for Halton Hills based on historical climate data), a Facility Vulnerability Assessment Report (which assessed the ability of ten of the Town's facilities to withstand the impacts of climate change), and a Geospatial Natural Capital Assessment Report (to map out Halton Hills' significant natural assets and understand their vulnerability to climate change).

An Action Plan was prepared to implement the objectives outlined in the Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Specific recommendations include introducing guidelines for parks to address more extreme weather conditions as a result of climate change, assessing impacts of hotter temperatures on the local farming community, encouraging new development to contribute to the protection and enhancement of the Town's tree canopy, encouraging developments to incorporate low-impact development features for stormwater management, and supporting local food production, including urban gardening and urban farming.

The Halton Hills OPR will adopt a climate change lens, integrating climate change adaptation into a new vision for the Town and considering direct and indirect policies to support resiliency in the face of climate change.



2.3.6.2 Low Carbon Transition Strategy

Developed in 2021 by Sustainable Solutions Group, the Low Carbon Transition Strategy provides guidance on how the public and private sectors can work together to meet Halton Hills' climate goals, and in particular, its target to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) by 2030.

The Strategy identifies four key action areas:

- Enable low-carbon mobility
- Enable energy efficiency and green development
- Replace fossil fuel energy with local renewable energy
- Protect and expand natural assets

To achieve these objectives, the Low Carbon Transition Strategy identifies net-zero scenarios tied to specific actions. Actions most relevant to the OPR include encouraging infill, new buildings to be net-zero ready, solar power generation including rooftop solar, tree planting, and sustainable soil management practices.

The Halton Hills OPR will consider direct and indirect policies to support the low carbon transition.

2.3.6.3 Privately-Owned Tree Management Strategy

The Halton Hills Privately-Owned Tree Management Strategy was prepared by Aboud & Associates in 2021 to protect the Town's tree canopy and manage trees on privately-owned land. It outlines tools to protect and enhance trees located on private lands and supports several of the Town's plans and strategies, including the Climate Adaptation Plan.

Tools outlined in the Strategy include education-based management tools (including best management practices, personal appointments, workshops, and tree benefit calculators), incentive-based management tools, and regulation-based management tools. The Strategy recommends standardizing tree inventory and preservation requirements across the Town's site alteration by-law, subdivision manual, and site plan application guide and aligning them with recommend best management practices. The Strategy additionally recommends establishing a standard method for calculating compensation to address the loss of existing trees.

The Halton Hills OPR will include policies to protect and enhance the Town's tree canopy.

2.3.6.4 Land-Based Renewable Energy Mapping Study

The Town of Halton Hills is conducting a Land-Based Renewable Energy Mapping Study with the purpose of developing a series of technical documents to outline the opportunities and challenges associated with establishing land-based solar developments (including agrivoltaics) in Halton Hills. The study's key objectives include the following:

- Providing an understanding of land-based solar opportunities, impacts, and policies in Halton Hills for Staff and Council;

- Outlining Staff and Council's role in decision-making for land-based solar development in Halton Hills; and
- Outlining additional actions for the Town to further support land-based solar development

The anticipated timeline for the completion of this study is fall 2025.

The Halton Hills OPR will consider policies to encourage land-based renewable energy, where appropriate.

2.3.6.5 Natural Assets Management

O. Reg. 588/17 under the Infrastructure for *Jobs and Prosperity Act* (2015) requires municipalities to have a comprehensive asset management plan in place for all municipal assets including green infrastructure such as trees, forests and wetlands. To build more climate change resilience into its operations, the Town completed a Natural Assets Inventory Pilot Project in 2021. To meet legislative requirements and sustainability goals, the Town is currently building upon this pilot project through the development of the Green Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (GIAMP). The GIAMP will identify and assess Town owned green infrastructure such as wetlands, meadows, forests and stature trees along streets and in parks. The plan will reflect the ecosystem services provided by the Town's natural features and will outline costs, benefits, and best practices associated with managing green infrastructure in the Town. The GIAMP is scheduled to be completed in 2026.

The Halton Hills OPR will explore opportunities to define natural assets, incorporate natural asset management into Town objectives, and connect the concept to existing stormwater management and natural heritage policies.

2.3.7 Parkland and Recreation

2.3.7.1 Parkland Acquisition Study

In 2018, The Planning Partnership and NBLC completed a report, providing Parkland Dedication Research and Recommendations for an updated Halton Hills Parkland Dedication By-law. The recommendations sought to create a parkland dedication system that is appropriate, equitable, consistent, and long-lasting. Key challenges raised in the report included the need for different approaches for securing and maintain urban versus suburban parks as well as the impact of parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu rates in incentivizing or disincentivizing parkland outcomes and/or desired development. Although the report's recommendations spoke directly to amendments to the Town's Parkland Dedication By-law, proposed changes would require updated Official Plan policies to implement them. Key among them were developing a more robust urban parks hierarchy; identifying opportunities for reductions or exemptions from parkland dedication requirements for the purposes of achieving intensification, economic development, and/or other municipal objectives; and clarifying the Town's expectations for when and what kind of parkland dedication, off-site parkland dedication, or cash-in-lieu is required.

The Halton Hills OPR will update the Town's parkland hierarchy and set out the framework for further updates to the Town's Parkland Dedication By-law.



2.3.7.2 Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan

Completed in 2020, the Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan sets out 11 strategic actions for the following five years to increase the ability of residents to live active and healthy lifestyles in a community defined by, and connected through, the Town's parks system. The strategy was based on a number of values including, welcoming and safe environments for everyone; diverse, inclusive and affordable services; volunteerism; innovation; healthy and active lifestyles; community engagement collaboration; nature awareness and preservation; and quality customer experiences. The Recreation and Parks Strategic Plan is scheduled to be updated in 2026-2027.

While a significant portion of the Strategic Action Plan speaks to specific programming needs, the Halton Hills OPR will support the goals of the Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan by emphasizing the importance of access to physical recreation opportunities and facilitating innovative opportunities to connect Halton Hills residents to nature, whether through community allotment gardens, natural playgrounds, or eco-parks.

2.3.7.3 Community Development Action Plan

Prepared in 2020, the Town's Community Development Action Plan provides a detailed framework and actions to engage the community and foster greater collaboration with Recreation and Parks in the delivery of recreation opportunities. The Action Plan focuses on capacity building for community-organized recreation, supporting community well-being

by empowering and supporting individuals to advocate for their needs, and encouraging community and neighbourhood engagement.

The Halton Hills OPR will incorporate the vision of the Community Development Action Plan into guiding principles for the new Official Plan.

2.3.8 Arts & Culture

2.3.8.1 Cultural Heritage Strategy

ERA developed a Cultural Heritage Strategy for the Town in 2023 to guide the conservation of Halton Hills' unique cultural heritage resources and character areas. It outlined key objectives and provided recommendations for ways to achieve the vision and objectives, which included an overview of tools for the identification and conservation of cultural heritage in Halton Hills. Recommendations addressed matters such as gentle intensification that is compatible, context sensitive, and respectful of existing character. Tools include the heritage register/inventories, Historic Context Statements, more formalized processes for the evaluation of heritage properties, incentives to encourage adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, as well as best practice guidance documents. The Cultural Heritage Strategy also identifies recommendations addressing Truth and Reconciliation and climate change adaptation.

The Halton Hills OPR will incorporate the vision outlined in the Cultural Heritage Strategy into guiding principles for the new Official Plan. In addition, the OPR will consider policies to support the identification, conservation, and management of cultural heritage resources, outline new Ontario Heritage Act mandated processes, adopt best practice guidance, and ensure definitions in the Official Plan are consistent with the highest-order provincial policy.



2.3.8.2 Cultural Master Plan

The Town's current Cultural Master Plan (CMP) was released in July 2013, outlining a local definition of culture, an in-depth needs assessment of cultural resources in the town, a community assessment summary detailing the history and unique physical and cultural aspects of the town, and recommendations to support ongoing cultural planning in Halton Hills. The Master Plan includes a Physical Design Potentials Plan (offering recommendations for the integration of cultural development into the physical design of the Town, including locations for gateways, scenic loops, and wayfinding), Sector Management Recommendations, and Project-Specific Recommendations. The Plan speaks to overlaps between cultural planning and economic development, public realm and urban design, and sustainability. The current CMP was developed by a community organization prior to the Town establishing Cultural Services staff. It is currently being updated by the Town.

The Halton Hills OPR will integrate the vision of the new Cultural Master Plan into the guiding principles of the new Official Plan and consider policies to integrate cultural resources into the planning and design of communities.



2.3.8.3 Public Art Master Plan

The Town of Halton Hills Public Art Master Plan was developed in 2018 by The Planning Partnership in collaboration with the Town's Public Art Advisory Board to plan for public art on priority sites and establish a process for the Town to acquire, manage and maintain public art. It builds on key policy documents, including the Town's Strategic Plan, Official Plan, Cultural Master Plan, Public Art Policy and Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy.

The Public Art Master Plan identifies the following areas in the town for the implementation of public art:

- Public and cultural facilities
- Parks and open spaces
- Trails
- Gateways and corridors
- Capital projects and studies

The Master Plan identifies specific locations for public art in Acton, Georgetown, Glen Williams, Limehouse and Norval.

The Halton Hills OPR will integrate the vision of the Public Art Master Plan into the guiding principles of the new Official Plan and consider policies to encourage public art in public and private spaces.

2.3.8.4 Safe and Welcoming Halton Hills

The Town is in the process of developing a strategy, which will include initiatives to address both internal (employee-facing) and external (public-facing) processes, policies, and practices. Initiatives will be broken down to address specific forms of discrimination, given their different contexts, roots, and presentation, including discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or physical ability. The strategy will respond to the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities Common Commitments, which include commitments relating to monitoring and addressing individual discrimination and systemic discrimination in the labour force, housing, and education, as well as appreciation for cultural diversity.



2.3.8.5 Truth and Reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released a report in December 2015 containing 94 calls to action for different levels of government; the corporate sector; specific organizations, institutions, and associations; as well as the broader Canadian society, to begin to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. The Town continues to advance truth and reconciliation through a number of initiatives. An engagement protocol is being developed in an effort to build relationships with Indigenous Nations and peoples, recognize treaty rights, and consult with Indigenous communities as part of Town projects including planning and development projects.

2.3.9 Economic Development

2.3.9.1 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

Initiated in 2019, the 2021-2026 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy outlines goals and objectives to support a diversified and resilient economy in the Town of Halton Hills. Building off Halton Hills' reputation as a leader in innovation, economic opportunity, and climate change action, the Strategy identifies a number of initiatives focused on economic development, the green economy, brownfield development, tourism, and marketing. Economic Development will be updating the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy in 2026 with new key areas of focus.

The Halton Hills OPR will support the goals of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy by planning for an adequate supply of shovel ready land, supporting brownfield redevelopment, focusing on agri-tourism and downtown vibrancy to promote economic growth, and developing a vision for the Town that recognizes the need for high quality employment focusing on key target sectors.



2.3.9.2 Foreign Direct Investment Strategy

Building on the 2021-2026 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Strategy created a roadmap for Halton Hills to grow its local economy by strengthening the Town's position in the international market. Halton Hills' current FDI Strategy identifies advanced manufacturing, clean technology/renewables, food and beverage processing and agribusiness as target investment attraction sectors for the Town. It also identifies Germany and the Netherlands as primary focus markets for inbound FDI. The update of the FDI Strategy is scheduled for 2026 and will take new employment related policies and recommendations into consideration.

Although the FDI strategy is generally focused on marketing and relationship building, the strategy identifies infrastructure-related considerations that contribute to a municipality's ability to attract foreign investment, including shovel-ready industrial lands, infrastructure, housing supply, and alternative modes of transportation, which the Halton Hills OPR will seek to address.

2.3.10 Ongoing Studies and Plans

A number of studies and plans remain currently underway, including a Transit Implementation Plan, which will set out the implementation and operations of a marriage of transit services in Halton Hills over the next 10 years (including on-demand transit, conventional transit, and specialized transit services), a Green Infrastructure Management Plan, a Natural Environment Action Plan, as well as Biodiversity Studies.

Depending on the completion of these studies and plans, The Halton Hills OPR will consider recommendations emerging from the above work, as required.

2.3.11 Implementation

Although not providing direct input into the OPR project, there are a number of documents and tools that will be impacted by an updated Official Plan. Below represents a brief summary of existing tools used by the Town to implement the policies and objectives of the Official Plan. The OPR will take into consideration any impacts of new and revised policies on existing tools as well as opportunities for other non-policy tools to achieve the goals of the Town.

2.3.11.1 Zoning By-law

Adopted on July 19, 2010, Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2010-0050 translates policies in the Official Plan into site-level regulations on what, where, and how development can occur. The Zoning By-law contains 17 sections, outlining regulations relating to different zone categories, including Urban Residential, Urban Commercial, Urban Employment, Non-Urban, Environmental and Open Space, Institutional, and Other Zones, as well as exceptions, temporary use zones, and holding provisions. Zone-specific regulations include permitted uses, height, density, and setbacks with other regulations, including parking requirements, applying to all zone categories.

Under Section 26(9) of the *Planning Act*, municipalities are required to update their zoning by-laws within three years of a new official plan coming into effect.

2.3.11.2 Parkland Dedication By-law

By-law 2022-0043 implements Section 42 of the *Planning Act*, namely outlining requirements for the conveyance of land (or payment of cash-in-lieu) of parkland for public park purposes. The by-law identifies when the conveyance of parkland is required (for what kind of development and what kind of development application), how much, and how/when it is calculated.

Bill 23 introduced some changes to the *Planning Act* relating to what kind of land can be offered as parkland (see Section 2.1.1.1). Although these legislative changes are not yet in force, the new Official Plan will need to reflect them for when they are proclaimed, which will then need to be reflected in an amendment to the Parkland Dedication By-law.

2.3.11.3 Site Plan Control By-law

By-law 2013-0070 implements Section 41 of the *Planning Act*, establishing a site plan control area and defining types of development subject to site plan control. Site plan approval provides the Town the opportunity to review the detailed aspects of a proposed development to ensure specific design requirements associated with site layout, building design, and circulation, among other things, are addressed.

2.3.11.4 Community Improvement Plan

Adopted in 2022, the Halton Hills Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a five-year plan aimed to support local businesses and encourage revitalization and private sector investment. The CIP reflects the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2021-2026) as well as other Town goals and priorities including storefront/main street revitalization, affordable housing, brownfield redevelopment, agriculture/agri-business, heritage, arts and culture, climate change, and accessibility. Enabled through Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, the CIP includes financial, procedural, and other incentives to encourage private sector investment.







2.3.11.5 Green Development Standards

Originally introduced in 2010, the Town's Green Development Standards (GDS) are currently in its 3rd version approved in Jun 2021. GDS v3 aims to elevate the sustainability performance of new developments in Halton Hills and to ensure alignment with current best practices in sustainable building and development. GDS v3 is partly based on the Town of Halton Hills' Climate Change Emergency Declaration issued in May 2019, which established community-wide net-zero carbon goals. GDS v3 consists of 12 measures organized into 5 categories: energy and water, ecology, resiliency, transportation, and innovation. Each measure has points associated with it. To be compliant with the GDS v3, all new developments and major additions must demonstrate achievement of at least 20 points.

Section 3: Key Issues & Constraints

Based on the review presented in Section 2, the following section outlines preliminary issues and opportunities to be considered as part of the Halton Hills OPR. These issues and opportunities generally consist of conformity considerations (✓); opportunities for integration of regional or municipal strategies and plans (?); and opportunities for innovative policies based on best practice (!); consistent with the Purpose outlined in Section 1.3 and have been grouped according to themes that will be explored further in Phase 2.

Note, the below is a preliminary list of issues and opportunities. The Policy Directions Report prepared in Phase 3 of the OPR will build on the issues and opportunities identified here and may include policy direction on additional gaps, opportunities, and conflicts that may be identified (including through public engagement) as the OPR progresses.

	Growth Management		Infrastructure & Servicing
	Climate Change and the Environment		Complete Communities
	Agriculture		General Policy

3.1 Growth Management

- ✓ Establish population, housing, and employment forecasts to determine intensification and greenfield development targets and incorporate boundary expansions that have been approved by the Province to 2051 (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Identify strategic growth areas, including the potential for new major transit station areas and frequent transit corridors, to focus growth (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Consider minimum density targets for designated growth areas (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Consider policies to further encourage and support residential development, including redevelopment of underutilized commercial plazas and post-secondary institutions (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Consider revised language and/or policies to reflect a greater emphasis on providing a full range of housing options (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Integrate OPA No. 58 permitting additional residential units (*Planning Act*).
- ✓ Review land use designations and policies in light of more recent definitions of 'Area of Employment' and 'Employment Area' as set out in the *Planning Act* and Provincial Planning Statement, respectively (*Planning Act*, Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Revise employment conversion policies (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Revise land use compatibility policies to permit greater adjacencies where impacts can be minimized/mitigated (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ? Review land use designations and associated policies to ensure sufficient lands to accommodate housing, employment, and commercial land needs (Employment Land Needs Assessment, Retail Commercial Demand Study).
- ? Review land use designations and policies to investigate potential of expanding use permissions to reflect emerging business, investment, recreation and tourism trends (Economic Development and Tourism Strategy).
- ! Consider future fixed-route transit systems when identifying strategic growth areas (Transit Service Strategy).

3.2 Agriculture

- ✓ Ensure an 'agricultural system' approach (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Protect lands for agricultural use outside of identified urban areas (Provincial Planning Statement, Climate Change Adaptation Plan).

- ✓ Allow for on-farm diversified uses that provide opportunities for additional income generation with preserving farmland and maintaining compatibility with farm operations (Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas).
- ✓ Address how lots can be created in the agricultural area, including surplus farm dwelling severances arising from consolidation of farm operations (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ? Address the mapping of Agricultural System reconciling the regional and provincial mapping, including engagement with the agricultural community in Halton Hills (Regional Official Plan, Draft ROPA 50).
- ! Incorporate cannabis policies from the current Official Plan.
- ! Consider policies to encourage sustainable soil management (Low Carbon Transition Strategy).
- ! Consider policies to encourage innovative farming practices (Agricultural Roundtable).

3.3 Climate Change and the Environment

- ✓ Ensure policies reflect the changing scope and responsibilities of conservation authorities (*Conservation Authorities Act*).
- ? Consider Regional Natural Heritage System policies and draft Natural Heritage System mapping (Regional Official Plan, Draft ROPA 50).
- ? Review the draft Regional Natural Heritage System mapping and the Agricultural System mapping to ensure alignment. Coordinate policies for natural heritage and agriculture to support agriculture and natural heritage.
- ? Consider recommendations of ongoing studies and plans, including the Green Infrastructure Master Plan, the Natural Environment Action Plan, and Biodiversity Studies, as required.
- ! Consider policies to support brownfield development (Economic Development and Tourism Strategy).
- ! Consider policies to encourage the protection/enhancement of the tree canopy, including provision of diverse tree species that mitigate climate change impacts (Privately-Owned Tree Management Strategy).
- ! Support more compact urban form, generally focusing development away from highest quality/most resilient ecosystems (Climate Change Adaptation Plan).
- ! Consider policies to support local food production, including urban gardening and urban farming (Climate Change Adaptation Plan).

- ! Consider policies to encourage low-impact development features for stormwater management (e.g. rain water harvesting, permeable pavements, rain gardens, green roofs) where feasible.
- ! Consider policies to encourage buildings to strive for net-zero energy (Low Carbon Transition Strategy).
- ! Consider policies to encourage weather protection features in building and park design (Climate Change Adaptation Plan).

3.4 Infrastructure & Servicing

- ✓ Consider a watershed planning approach to inform planning for sewage and water services and stormwater management (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Align with any comprehensive municipal plans for stormwater management that consider cumulative impacts of development on stormwater at a watershed scale (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Improve or restore the quality and quantity of water by minimizing potential negative impacts, including cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Ensure proposed distribution of population/employment is supported by existing and/or planned infrastructure capacity.
- ✓ Consider opportunities for the allocation (and reallocation) of unused system capacity of municipal water services and municipal sewage services (*Planning Act*, Provincial Planning Statement).
- ? Reflect the vision of the Mobility Master Plan and Active Transportation Master Plan in the guiding principles of the new Official Plan (Mobility Master Plan, Active Transportation Master Plan).
- ? Create a transportation network map highlighting road network, transit network, preferred truck routes, and active transportation network (Mobility Master Plan, Trucking Strategy, Active Transportation Master Plan).
- ? Consider recommendations of ongoing studies and plans, including the Transit Implementation Plan, as required.
- ! Consider policies to optimize the supply of parking, integrating parking with sustainable transportation modes and supporting economic and community needs.
- ! Consider policies to encourage low-impact development features for stormwater management where feasible (Stormwater Master Plan).

3.5 Complete Communities

- ✓ Consider revised language and/or policies to reflect a new definition of 'complete community' (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Consider revised language and/or policies to reflect a greater emphasis on social equity (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Develop processes for early engagement with Indigenous communities and ensure their interests are considered when identifying, protecting, and managing cultural heritage resources (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Revise heritage-related definitions in the Official Plan to be consistent with provincial policy definitions (Cultural Heritage Strategy).
- ? Reflect the vision of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Cultural Master Plan, Cultural Heritage Strategy, Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan, Community Development Action Plan, Climate Change Adaptation Plan, and Low Carbon Transition Strategy in the guiding principles of the new Official Plan.
- ? Consider policies to support more knowledge-based sectors (Employment Land Needs Assessment).
- ? Review land use designations and policies to investigate potential for expanding use permissions to reflect emerging business, investment, recreation, and tourism trends (Economic Development and Tourism Strategy).
- ? Encourage downtowns as centres for economic and tourist activity (Economic Development and Tourism Strategy).
- ? Adopt best practice guidance including the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (Cultural Heritage Strategy).
- ! Consider policies to support transit-oriented development (Transit Service Strategy).
- ! Consider policies to encourage active transportation use (Mobility Master Plan, Active Transportation Master Plan).
- ! Consider policies for development and sensitive intensification in proximity to cultural heritage resources (Cultural Heritage Strategy).
- ! Consider policies that incorporate cultural heritage policies more broadly in the Official Plan (Cultural Master Plan).
- ! Develop policy for heritage evaluation of properties on the heritage inventory when re-development is proposed (Cultural Heritage Strategy).

3.6 General Policy

- ✓ Revise language to reflect new and revised definitions (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Remove references to municipal comprehensive review (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Ensure policies reflect the changing scope of Regional planning responsibilities, recognizing the Region will retain a commenting role as an agency involved in the planning regional infrastructure (*Planning Act*).
- ✓ Consolidate unconsolidated official plan amendments.
- ✓ Coordinate with service managers, schools boards, and post-secondary institutions to allow for a more integrated approach to dealing with planning for housing and public infrastructure (Provincial Planning Statement).
- ✓ Integrate approved Secondary Plans into the primary Official Plan.
- ? Consider additional, non-policy tools to achieve municipal goals.
- ! Have regard for adjacent municipal land use designations and policies.

Section 4: Policy Development Principles

The OPR is intended to result in an updated Official Plan that satisfies the statutory requirements for Official Plans outlined in the *Planning Act*, ensuring ongoing conformity of local policy with provincial policy and legislative directions. However, this project also provides an opportunity to reimagine an innovative and modern Official Plan for the Town of Halton Hills beyond the policy content.

Below represents five key principles that will guide the formulation of policies as part of the OPR. As some principles impact some users more than others, each is identified by a user icon:



Town staff



Property owners/development community



Broader public

Easy to Navigate



Users should be able to easily find the information they are looking for.

This includes,

- A clear and intuitive structure to the document
- Clear and intuitive formatting to visually group related information and visually separate unrelated information
- Minimal jumping between sections to find relevant information
- Where references to other sections are necessary, hyperlinks can make navigating easier

Easy to Interpret



Once the user finds the information, it should be easy to understand.

This includes,

- Use of plain language
- Use of definitions only where they provide additional clarity (go beyond the colloquial meaning of a word)
- Use of non-operative elements to help clarify the context or intent of policy, including diagrams, call-out boxes, and introductory language

Easy to Apply



As both property owners and Town staff use the Official Plan to guide and review development concepts, policies must reflect,

- A balance between clarity and flexibility

Easy to Access



Different users may engage with the Official Plan in different formats; the new Official Plan will need to consider,

- Formatting that is clear in both digital and print formats
- Symbolology that is clear in both colour and black-and-white
- Accessibility considerations as outlined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*

Easy to Amend



As a living document, the Official Plan should be formatted in a way that allows for easy amendment by staff over time. This includes,

- Grouping like policies together and avoiding redundancy/repetition of policies to limit the number of sections that will need to be amended at any given time
- An editable document format (Word over InDesign)

Section 5: Next Steps

This Background Report represents the first step in the Halton Hills OPR project. Key policy issues and opportunities outlined here will form the foundation for developing policy recommendations in future phases of the project. Upon completion of this report, the consultant team, in collaboration with the Town, will,

- Present the findings and preliminary recommendations of the Background Report to stakeholders, Indigenous communities, and the general public as part of the project kick-off to confirm key issues to be addressed as part of the OPR;
- Complete technical studies on a variety of topics including growth management, commercial needs, housing, agriculture, cultural heritage, and natural heritage system to provide the technical backing of new policies; and
- Prepare a Policy Directions Report, translating findings from the technical studies into clear policy recommendations.

Consultation with key stakeholders, Indigenous communities, and the general public will continue throughout the process to ensure the new Official Plan continues to reflect the vision and priorities of the community.



2025