

Regional Urban Structure – Discussion Questions

Technical Questionnaire		
Number	Question	Response
1	<p>How can the Regional Official Plan further support the development of Urban Growth Centres?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 30-32 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>This question is not applicable to the Town of Halton Hills since there are no designated Urban Growth Centres within the municipal boundaries of the Town.</p>
2	<p>Should the Region consider the use of Inclusionary Zoning in Protected Major Transit Station Areas to facilitate the provision of affordable housing?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 33-37 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>Inclusionary Zoning should be implemented at the Local level. Inclusionary Zoning is a tool that requires careful consideration since the implementation process prescribed by the respective regulations is very rigorous and will require additional resources. As per Ontario Regulation 232/18 in order to plan for Inclusionary Zoning, municipalities will need to undertake a housing assessment report which will include housing related research and analysis such as an analysis of demographics and population, an analysis of housing supply and household income and the written opinion from a person independent of the municipality to support the housing assessment results. The municipality will also be required to update the assessment report every five years. Town staff look forward to continuing discussing the benefits of using this tool at the Regional level with the Region and the other Halton municipalities through the ongoing MCR process.</p>
3	<p>Should the Region consider the use of the Protected Major Transit Station Areas tool under the Planning Act, to protect the Major Transit Station Areas</p>	<p>MTSAs throughout the Region should be evaluated on a case by case basis. A blanket approach to the delineation of MTSAs should not be applied. Each tool needs to be evaluated to ensure that it will fit the local context and align with local plans and priorities as well as any other work completed and supported by Council at the local level.</p>

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	<p>policies in the Regional Official Plan and local official plans from appeal? If so, should all Major Transit Station Areas be considered or only those Major Transit Station Areas on Priority Transit Corridors?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 33-37 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>Town staff look forward to continuing discussing the benefits of potentially using this tool to protect all MTSAs at the Regional level with the Region and the other Halton municipalities through the ongoing MCR process.</p>
4	<p>From the draft boundaries identified in Appendix B and the Major Transit Station Area boundary delineation methodology outlined, do you have any comments on the proposed boundaries? Is there anything else that should be considered when delineating the Major Transit Station Areas?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 36-37 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>Overall, Town staff acknowledges the efforts by the Region to consider local planning studies and priorities through the development of Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs). We also appreciate the need to, as much as possible, apply a consistent methodology through the identification of MTSAs within the Region. The Town has also identified additional key nodes and corridors adjacent to and beyond the MTSA boundaries through the Intensification Opportunities Study Update (e.g., Guelph Street, from Maple Avenue to Hall Road, in Georgetown and Queen Street, from Tanners Drive to Eastern Avenue, in Acton) as having high intensification potential and will continue to recognize these key intensification opportunities through a future Local Official Plan Amendment.</p> <p>The timing for finalizing the Intensification OPA will be contingent on the ongoing Regional Official Plan Review program schedule.</p>

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5	<p>How important are Major Transit Station Areas as a component of Halton's Regional Urban Structure? What is your vision for these important transportation nodes?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 33-37 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>The Georgetown GO Station/Mill Street Corridor Area is a Major Transit Station Area which is intended to be the primary focus for high density residential and/or mixed use intensification in the Town. The Acton Major Transit Station Area is located primarily in Downtown Acton. This area is intended to accommodate moderate levels of intensification.</p> <p>As per the Town of Halton Hills Official Plan, planning for the Major Transit Station Area shall be guided by the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To achieve increased residential and employment densities to ensure the viability of existing and planned transit infrastructure and service; and, b) To provide access from various transportation modes to the transit station, including consideration of, but not limited to, pedestrians, bicycle routes and bicycle parking, commuter pick-up/drop-off areas, carpool parking, car share vehicles, and parking/recharging stations for electric vehicles. <p>In the Town, there are areas in the Georgetown and Acton MTSA's that consist of stable residential neighbourhoods, the character of which should be protected from incompatible intensification. Consideration of the local character is needed when developing policies for these important transportation nodes. The Region should refer to the Intensification Opportunities Study Update when considering the local vision for these important key intensification areas in the Municipality.</p>
6	<p>Building on the 2041 Preliminary Recommended Network from the Determining Major Transit Requirement, should corridors be identified as</p>	<p>In our view, the Regional Official Plan already provides appropriate policy direction regarding intensification areas. For example, Part III, Section 81 (2) requires Local Official Plans to identify intensification areas with detailed boundaries in accordance with the objectives and policies of the Regional Official Plan. Section 81 (3) requires local municipalities to prepare area specific plans for the development of new intensification areas or the</p>

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	<p>Strategic Growth Areas in the Regional Official Plan? If so, should a specific minimum density target be assigned to them?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 37-42 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>redevelopment of an existing intensification area. Section 81 (7) requires local municipalities to establish minimum densities for intensification areas, prohibit density reductions and promote densities that will support existing and planned transit services.</p> <p>Based on the foregoing, staff does not see the need for the Region to identify additional intensification corridors and nodes in the Regional Official Plan. We are particularly concerned about the introduction of prescriptive targets and densities at a regional scale. In our view, such matters are more appropriately incorporated in local municipal studies and official plan policies. Such an approach would also be consistent with Part II, Section 44 of the Regional Official Plan which states as follows:</p> <p><i>The Region's primary role is to provide broad policy directions on strategic matters such as the management of land and natural resources, growth strategies, housing, economic development, water and wastewater services, solid waste management, transportation, and health and social services. Recognizing the above, the Local Municipalities are to deal with their local environments to best express their own individualities. The structuring of communities and neighbourhoods and the internal configuration of each of the Local Municipalities, for instance, are the responsibilities of the Municipalities as long as the overall planning vision for Halton and policies of this Plan are adhered to.</i></p>
7	<p>Should the Regional Official Plan identify additional multi-purpose and minor arterial roads in the Regional Urban Structure, not for the purposes of directing growth, but to support a higher order Regional transit network?</p> <p>For more information on this</p>	<p>The Region should not be identifying additional strategic intersections, nodes, corridors etc. on behalf of the local municipalities. If additional local multi-purpose and minor arterial roads are being identified to support a higher order Regional transit network, this should be done as part of a Regional Transit Strategy in consultation with local municipalities, specifically with staff from the Planning and Transportation Departments.</p>

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	topic, please see pages 37-42 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper .	
8	<p>Are there any other nodes in Halton that should be identified within the Regional Official Plan from a growth or mobility perspective (i.e. on Map 1)? If so, what should the function of these nodes be and should a density target or unit yield be assigned in the Regional Official Plan?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 42-43 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	See response for question # 6.
9	<p>Are there any other factors that should be considered when assessing Employment Area conversion requests in Halton Region?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 53-59 of the Regional Urban System</p>	<p>Other factors to consider include the benefits of the proposed conversion for the site and surrounding area; this includes considering the current context and how the potential conversion could trigger residential and employment intensification in key corridors.</p> <p>Specifically in Halton Hills, employment site conversion should consider a wide range of permitted uses that would enable the area to develop as a mixed-use community over the long-term. These sites may provide opportunities for office (a range of office uses, including multi-tenant office buildings smaller than 20,000 sq.ft.) retail and commercial services, and high-</p>

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10	<p>Are there any areas within Halton Region that should be considered as a candidate for addition to an Employment Area in the Regional Official Plan?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see page 63 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>The Region of Halton identified vacant lands outside the urban boundary within Halton Hills as Future Strategic Employment Areas. These are lands that are identified for potential re-designation to the employment land designation and will be reviewed during the Region of Halton Municipal Comprehensive Review.</p> <p>The Town's Employment Land Needs study indicates that the Town will need approximately 338 gross ha (835 gross acres) of additional designated employment lands to accommodate forecast demand to 2041. Working with the Region of Halton, the Town should pursue adding Future Strategic Employment Area lands to the urban area of the Premier Gateway Employment Area through the ROPR process.</p>
11	How can the Regional Official Plan support employment	A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 highlights how infrastructure supports growth. Infrastructure includes sewage

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	<p>growth and economic activity in Halton Region?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see page 64 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>and water systems, septage treatment systems, stormwater management systems, waste management systems, electricity generation facilities, electricity transmission and distribution systems, communication/telecommunications, transit and transportation corridors and facilities, oil and gas pipelines and associated facilities.</p> <p>Town staff reiterates the need to provide sufficient infrastructure capacity in strategic growth areas, including designated employment lands. Goal 1 of the Town's Economic Development Strategy is to establish a competitive development environment in Halton Hills, as part of this goal a recommended action is to ensure to have shovel ready employment lands available. To encourage economic investment and job creation in the Region, the Regional Official Plan should have concrete policies that support the need for area specific plans to be approved in a timely and focused basis. Regional investment in infrastructure and services (e.g., transit/Active Transportation, water/ sewer infrastructure) is vital to promote dynamic employment areas and job creation.</p> <p>Additionally, the Town would like to see flexibility with regards to considering employment trends and sectors, such as the advanced manufacturing, clean technology, and food processing sectors.</p> <p>The Region Official Plan could also include policies to incentivize brownfield redevelopment and support the Town's brownfields Community Improvement Plan programs to ensure that the Brownfield redevelopment incentive program is economically meaningful to investors, particularly for large and/or heavily contaminated sites.</p>
12	<p>What type of direction should the Regional Official Plan provide regarding planning for uses that are ancillary to or supportive of the primary</p>	<p>Similar to the response provided to Question 11, the Region should recognize the significance of infrastructure support as a vital component in planning for uses that are ancillary to or supportive of the primary employment uses in employment areas.</p>

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	<p>employment uses in employment areas? Is there a need to provide different policy direction or approaches in different Employment Areas based on the existing or planning employment context?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see page 65 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>As part of the Town of Halton Hills' Economic Development Strategy, Goal 4 aims to establish Halton Hills as a competitive location for new business investment. Though there are key industries that result in economic growth such as manufacturing and logistics, it is also crucial to recognize opportunities to attract other sectors within these employment areas. For example, attracting entertainment and culture sectors will in turn attract professional services.</p> <p>Flexible policies can be implemented to allow auxiliary uses that can complement areas and provide an appropriate mix of amenities and open space to serve those who work in the area. Policies can encourage the implementation of mixed use development in employment areas, such as offices and residential space, or warehouse and office space.</p>
13	<p>How can the Regional Official Plan support planning for employment on lands outside Employment Areas, and in particular, within Strategic Growth Areas and on lands that have been converted? What policies, tools or approaches can assist with ensuring employment growth and economic activity continues to occur and be planned for within these areas?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 66-67 of the Regional Urban System</p>	<p>The Regional Official plan can support local municipalities in encouraging a range and mix of land uses that create synergies between people, businesses and institutions, in order to foster vibrant, inclusive and economically sustainable communities.</p> <p>The Region Official Plan can include policies to support local Community Improvement Plans (s. 28 of Planning Act) Business Improvement Areas (s. 204 to s. 215 of Municipal Act, 2001). Additionally, the Region should ensure that the Regional Official Plan connects to and reflects the intentions of the Regional Economic Development Plan with relation to encouraging employment growth and economic activities within Growth Areas and lands that have been converted.</p>

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14	<p>Are there other factors, besides those required by the Growth Plan, Regional Official Plan or Integrated Growth Management Strategy Evaluation Framework that Halton Region should consider when evaluating the appropriate location for potential settlement area expansions?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 70-74 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>The Town of Halton Hills has a unique community structure. The Town is comprised of two separate Urban Mixed Use Areas (Acton and Georgetown), three Employment Areas (Acton, Georgetown and the Premier Gateway), numerous hamlets and rural clusters, and vast Agricultural and Natural Heritage System lands, all within the community boundaries. These elements help to define and shape the community and make Halton Hills distinctive within the Regional context.</p> <p>When evaluating the appropriate location for potential settlement area expansions, the Region should consider Council's vision as entrenched in our Strategic Plan related to achieving sustainable growth and climate change such as the key priorities listed below. For more information on the updated Council Strategic Plan visit https://www.haltonhills.ca/en/residents/halton-hills-strategic-plan.aspx:</p> <p>Achieve Sustainable Growth — To ensure that growth is managed so as to ensure a balanced, sustainable, well planned community infrastructure and services to meet the needs of its residents and businesses.</p> <p>Halton Hills harnesses its future population and employment growth to provide new opportunities for residents, workers, businesses, and visitors. Halton Hills works to ensure housing is accessible to all its residents at any age or stage in life. Halton Hills grows in a way that embodies its values of social, economic, fiscal, and environmental sustainability. Staff engages with other levels of government to see that population growth in Halton Hills remains moderate.</p> <p>Focus Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Greenfield Growth • Intensification

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Downtown Revitalization• Employment Lands• Affordable Housing• Water and Wastewater infrastructure <p>Climate change and environment — The residents and businesses of Halton Hills are responsible members of the global community, and are leaders in the fight against climate change, with a goal to be a Net-Zero Carbon Community by 2030. Halton Hills communities prepare for changes we know are coming while reducing our carbon footprint. The municipality makes its landscape more climate resilient and beautiful through a lush tree canopy and public open space.</p> <p>Focus areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action on Climate Change• Resilient Infrastructure• Low Carbon Transition• Tree Canopy <p>The current growth strategy for the Town emphasizes moderate growth through intensification, greenfield growth and employment growth. In the event that an urban boundary expansion is required to accommodate residential growth to 2051, it will be important to consider infrastructure decisions and commitments that have already been made. Settlement Area expansions to accommodate employment growth should consider the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to adequate transportation and proximity to major highway interchanges as well as other local/regional transportation infrastructure.• Access to employment-supportive commercial uses (e.g. hotels, daycares,
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		Town Staff have identified the need in the near future for a significant sized Town wide community park to be located outside of the settlement area to service the expected future population growth.
15	<p>What factors are important for the Region to consider in setting a minimum Designated Greenfield Area density target for Halton Region as whole, and for each of the Local Municipalities? Should the Region use a higher minimum Designated Greenfield Area density target than the 50 residents and jobs per hectare target in the Growth Plan?</p> <p>For more information on this topic, please see pages 74-77 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>When evaluating the factors to consider when setting a minimum Designated Greenfield Area density target, the Region should consider Council's vision as entrenched in the Town's Strategic Plan related to achieving sustainable growth and climate change (see details listed in previous response).</p> <p>Town staff are of the opinion that Greenfield Area density targets can be higher than the required 50 residents and jobs per hectare target in the Growth Plan (2019). Vision Georgetown for instance, has been planned at a minimum density target of 60 residents and jobs per hectare. In addition, it is important to note that the municipality supported the use of a higher density target (60 residents and jobs per hectare) as part of the Amendment 1 HAPP Joint Submission prepared in July 2020.</p> <p>There are a number of additional factors that must be considered when assessing density targets including the community context, providing a range of housing options to meet the needs of the different demographics in the Region (seniors, families, affordable, accessible) and supporting compact growth principals.</p>
16	Are there any additional considerations or trends that Halton Region should review in terms of the Regional Urban Structure component of the Regional Official Plan Review?	The Town of Halton Hills has a unique community structure. We are comprised of two separate Urban Mixed Use Areas (Acton and Georgetown), three Employment Areas (Acton, Georgetown and the Premier Gateway), numerous hamlets and rural clusters, and vast Agricultural and Natural Heritage System lands, all within our community boundaries. These elements help to define and shape our community and make us distinctive within the Regional context.

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		When evaluating the Regional Urban Structure component of the ROPR, the Region should consider the themes, focus areas and goals of the Town of Halton Hills' updated Strategic Plan particularly related to Shaping Growth and Climate Change (see response for Question 14 above)
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General Questionnaire – Outstanding Questions – Regional Urban Structure (Integrated Growth Management Strategy)		
1	Which areas of the community, such as Major Transit Station Areas, Urban Growth Centres, corridors and other potential strategic growth areas, should be the primary focus for new houses and apartments? Why	<p>As per the Town of Halton Hills' Official Plan, the Georgetown GO Station/Mill Street Corridor Area is a Major Transit Station Area which is intended to be the primary focus for high density residential and/or mixed use intensification in the Town, and is subject to detailed Secondary Plan policies. The Acton Major Transit Station Area is located in Downtown Acton and is intended to accommodate moderate levels of intensification. The Region should refer to the Intensification Opportunities Study Update when considering the local vision for these important key intensification areas in the Municipality.</p> <p>In addition, the Town's Official Plan identifies a number of intensification nodes and corridors, particularly the nodes located at Maple Avenue and Guelph Street, at Mountainview Road and Guelph Street and McFarlane Drive/Hall Road and Guelph Street in Georgetown. Through the recent Intensification Opportunities Study Update, the Town identified additional intensification corridors such Guelph Street, from Sinclair Avenue to Hall Road in Georgetown and Queen Street, from Tanners Drive to Eastern Avenue in Acton. In addition, the Destination Downtown Secondary Plan which is currently awaiting Regional Approval has identified intensification opportunities in Downtown Georgetown.</p>
2	As the Region plans to accommodate new growth, should it focus on intensification of existing built up areas or on expansion into	In general, a number of factors need to be considered when planning for either intensification or greenfield expansion to accommodate new growth in the Region. When assessing the preferred growth option for the Region, the discussion on growth and development should be focused on the policies required to build complete communities.

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	<p>agricultural and natural areas? What is an appropriate balance?</p>	<p>Policies for building complete communities should encourage mixed-use development, and reduce the reliance of single-occupancy vehicle use by investing in transit and incentivizing residents to use public transit or other modes of transportation. Alternatively, the use of electric and hybrid vehicles and the required infrastructure (i.e. charging stations) should be encouraged. The policies of the Plan should also facilitate the development of future employment areas to ensure that a variety of employment opportunities are available for future residents within the Region.</p> <p>When planning for growth the Regional Official Plan should look at policies that provide opportunities and enough flexibility to implement innovative technologies that can help mitigate climate change impacts (e.g., effective storm water management, better site design using LID, and heat abatement/district energy systems). Well-planned communities can help reinforcing multimodal transportation options, smart growth principles, and help implement net-zero/ energy ready development. The focus should be on the nature and quality of growth.</p> <p>It is understood that all growth scenarios considered by the Region to date will require a settlement boundary expansion to accommodate employment growth and three out of the four scenarios being considered will require a settlement boundary expansion to accommodate residential growth. The Town continues to advocate for a Regional Growth Management Strategy that supports providing for a moderate scale of growth that enhances the Town's urban and community structure and protects its' rural character as directed by the objectives of the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Furthermore, this question refers to development in Natural Areas; staff note that development is prohibited within the Natural Heritage System.</p>
3	<p>How can the Regional Official Plan support a variety of mobility options to ensure</p>	<p>Please refer to the response to question 7 of the Technical Questionnaire. Through the Intensification Opportunities Study Update, the Town has identified key nodes and corridors as having high intensification potential and</p>

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	integration of transportation and land use planning in growth areas	will continue to recognize these key intensification opportunities through a future Local Official Plan Amendment. These intensification corridors include Guelph Street, between Maple Avenue and Hall Road in Georgetown and Queen Street, from Tanners Drive to Eastern Avenue in Acton. The Regional Official Plan policies should also encourage intensification in these intensification areas which are located along key transportation corridors. This effort will support the integration of transportation and land use planning in key intensification areas in the Town.
4	Are there opportunities for the Regional Official Plan to strengthen policies for ensuring adequate parks and open spaces near growth areas?	Planning for parks and open space near growth areas is done at the local level. Town staff suggests planning for local parks and open space remain a matter that is addressed through Secondary Plan processes and at the development application stage. With regards to planning for town wide community parks, Staff have identified the need in the near future for a significant sized Town wide community park to be located outside of the settlement area to service the expected future population growth. Flexibility within the agricultural and rural policies to permit this type of use, particularly if near/adjacent to settlement areas would be beneficial.
5	How can the Regional Official Plan support employment growth and economic activity in Halton Region?	Please refer to the response to question 11 of the Technical Questionnaire.

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6	Halton's Employment Areas are protected for employment uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, and offices. How should the Region balance protecting these Employment Areas with potential conversions to allow residential uses or a broader mix of uses	Please refer to the response to question 12 of the Technical Questionnaire.
7	The introduction of new sensitive land uses within or adjacent to Employment Areas could disrupt employment lands being used for a full range of business and/or industrial purposes. Are there other land use compatibility considerations that are important when considering where employment conversions should take place to protect existing and planned industry?	There are already Provincial and Regional land use compatibility guidelines in place that address compatibility issues and must be considered when assessing where employment conversions should take place to protect existing and planned industry.

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8	Having appropriate separation distances between employment uses and sensitive land uses (residential, etc.) is important for ensuring land use compatibility. What should be considered when determining an appropriate separation distance?	There are already Provincial and Regional land use compatibility guidelines in place that address compatibility issues and must be considered when assessing where employment conversions should take place to protect existing and planned industry.
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