



REPORT

REPORT TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

REPORT FROM: Tharushe Jayaveer, Planner – Policy/Development Review

DATE: September 12, 2020

REPORT NO.: PD-2020-0039

RE: Regional Official Plan Review – Climate Change Discussion Paper

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report PD-2020-0039 dated September 12, 2020, regarding the Regional Official Plan Review – Climate Change Discussion Paper, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council's consideration of this report be deferred to the October 13th Council meeting;

AND FURTHER THAT Council endorse the discussion question responses submitted by Town staff, attached as Schedule '2' to this report, to be submitted to the Region of Halton in advance of the commenting deadline of October 30, 2020;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Region of Halton as input into the Climate Change component of the Regional Official Plan Review Process;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Local Municipalities of Burlington, Milton and Oakville, Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation and the Grand River Conservation Authority

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

- Provide an overview of Halton Region's Climate Change Discussion Paper (attached as Schedule '1');
- Provide a summary of Town staff's key comments on the Discussion Paper; and,
- Provide staff's responses to the Discussion Questions, to be submitted to Halton Region by October 30, 2020 (attached as Schedule '2').

BACKGROUND:

1.0 Halton Region Official Plan Review

The Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) is ongoing and currently in Phase 2 of three phases. As part of Phase 2, the Region prepared five (5) Discussion Papers on the following topics: Rural and Agricultural System, Natural Heritage, Regional Urban Structure, Climate Change, and North Aldershot Planning Area. Landing Pages were developed for all the Discussion Papers to provide a simplified summary of the Discussion Papers intended to facilitate consultation with the public. The Discussion Papers and Landing Pages were presented as part of a workshop to Regional Council on July 8, 2020 and released for public consultation on July 15, 2020.

Each Discussion Paper introduces a number of discussion questions aimed to be answered by the reader. Responses are to be provided to the Region as public input into the ROPR process. Staff was advised by the Region that the General Questionnaire was prepared for the public while the Technical Questionnaire was prepared for local municipalities, developers, special interest groups etc. However, in mid-August the Region advised the local municipalities to comment on the General Questionnaire in addition to the Technical Questionnaire. Town staff provided responses to all discussion questions attached as Schedule '2' to this report.

1.1 Role of Climate Change in the Regional Official Plan Review

The Climate Change Discussion Paper relates to the following three components of the Regional Official Plan Review:

- *Integrated Growth Management Strategy:* the development and application of a climate change lens to the Integrated Growth Management Strategy to provide guidance on growth related decisions.
- *Rural and Agriculture:* Promote sustainable farm practices and stewardship activities that will contribute to the overall viability of farm operations and, therefore, the long-term ability to adapt to and mitigate climate change threats.
- *Natural Heritage System:* Provide for more resilient environments and support opportunities to reduce impacts of flooding and other risks associated with extreme weather events. Support the protection of the Natural Heritage System as a carbon sink to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2.0 Consultation with Town Staff

Halton Region has engaged HAPP members including planning staff from the City of Burlington, Town of Halton Hills, Town of Milton, Town of Oakville, Credit Valley Conservation, Grand River Conservation Authority and Conservation Halton through the ROPR process. Planning staff worked closely with the Town's Climate Change team and provided comments during the development of the draft Climate Change

Discussion Paper. Comments within this report and the responses to the discussion questions have been vetted by the Town's Climate Change team. It is understood that Town Staff will continue to be consulted as the ROPR process progresses and that the Region will continue to ensure that local municipal planning priorities and objectives are emphasized through this review.

COMMENTS:

1.0 Summary of Climate Change Discussion Paper

The Discussion Paper provides a summary of climate change risks and impacts for Halton, and options for integrating adaptation and mitigation into land use policies. The paper builds on the Regional Official Plan's sustainability vision by exploring a series of policy considerations that will enable the Region to address climate change and meet Provincial land use planning requirements in establishing a land use response to climate change through the Regional Official Plan (ROP).

The background analysis within the Climate Change Discussion Paper highlights key elements related to climate change causes, effects and responses. The following policy areas have been identified to examine options in relation to climate change and Provincial consistency and conformity requirements:

- **Growth Management:** The Discussion Paper builds on the Sustainable Halton approach embedded within the current Regional Official Plan in exploring ways to explicitly address climate change. The Paper introduces, for discussion, the concept of applying a climate change lens on growth management and how future growth and development impacts greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Transportation:** The Regional Official Plan Review seeks to build on the current ROP directions for providing and supporting an efficient multimodal transportation network and on the findings of many transportation studies such as the Transportation and Active Transportation Master Plan, the Mobility Management Strategy, and the Defining Major Transit Requirements study, to explore the effect of supporting transit in enabling complete streets and its impact on reducing greenhouse gas emission levels in Halton.
- **Energy and Utilities:** The Regional Official Plan Review offers opportunities to discuss options for supporting alternative and/or renewable energy sources and incorporating policy directions that encourage renewable and/or alternative energy systems and promote sustainable development guidelines in collaboration with local municipalities.
- **Agriculture:** The Regional Official Plan Review seeks input on how land use policies can be enhanced to support and promote sustainable farm practices and diversification of agricultural operations, which in turn can provide better access to revenue streams that allow farmers to invest in other economically viable

practices and support agricultural and food resilience in the face of climate change threats.

- **Natural Heritage and Environmental Quality:** The Regional Official Plan Review provides an opportunity to examine how policies could be strengthened to recognize and support the role of the Natural Heritage System in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change.

2.0 Summary of Town Staff Comments

- **Building complete communities:** Town staff emphasized the need to direct discussions regarding growth and development toward building complete communities. The final version of the Discussion Paper reflected staffs comments and reframed the conversation around the importance of building complete communities within existing urban areas and greenfield areas.
- **Intensification and greenfield growth:** Town staff highlighted the climate change impacts of intensification and greenfield growth and that the focus of the paper should be on the nature and quality of growth. These comments were reflected in the final version of the Discussion Paper.
- **Land use and transportation:** Town staff noted more importance on the connection between land use and transportation, particularly highlighting the need for growth to support investment in transit infrastructure, and to reference a specific strategy for the implementation of a higher order transit network.
- **Policies:** Overall Town staff is of the opinion that drawing clear connections between land-use policies and climate change is absolutely essential. Town staff supports the emphasis on initiatives to promote and enhance district energy, public transit, agriculture and the Natural Heritage System, and recognizes that the Region plays a vital role in supporting these key policy areas.

3.0 Next Steps in the ROPR Process

Upon release of the Discussion Papers and Landing Pages, the Region will record and respond to input received through public engagement, and present it to Regional Council in a Consultation Summary Report in the fall of 2020.

The comments the Region receives on the Discussion Papers and Landing Pages will be used in determining 'policy directions' that will be presented to Regional Council in advance of preparing amendments to the Regional Official Plan. It is anticipated that the Region will provide additional opportunities for public engagement, such as Public Information Centres (PICs) and stakeholder meetings, in the forthcoming Phase 3 of the Regional Official Plan Review in 2021. Phase 3 will involve presenting draft ROP policy directions for public and stakeholder group comment and finalizing any necessary Regional Official Plan Amendment(s). Further public consultation on policy directions for each ROP component will take place in 2021. Town staff will continue to keep members of Council informed on any developments and engagement opportunities associated with the ROPR, including:

- Regional Council workshops on ROPR components;
- Any public outreach including Town Halls, PICs, or any online consultation;
- Any planned presentations to local Councils by Regional staff on the progress of the ROPR;
- Any reports to Regional Council on the progress of the ROPR;
- Any future opportunities for Town staff to engage in and provide comment on the ROPR; and,
- Future Town staff reports on the progress for the ROPR.

The Region is also proposing to introduce a separate ROPA to address local municipal planning priorities related to urban structure and to facilitate a special meeting of Council by year end 2020. The proposed ROPA will include the following planning matters: Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas (including boundaries and density targets), Strategic Growth Corridors (potential identification and density targets) and limited Employment Land Conversions of those properties identified by local municipalities as having strategic importance in advancing elements of the local urban structure.

As Council may recall, Regional Council previously directed that the four growth concepts based on the "Local Plans and Priorities Growth Scenarios" be carried forward for further refinement and analysis. It is our understanding that further work is being undertaken by the Region on the concepts to respond to the revised growth forecasts and extended planning horizon contained in Amendment No. 1 to the Growth Plan. The exact timelines to present the revised growth concepts and ultimately select a preferred growth concept have yet to be finalized.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

This report directly aligns to the following values and priorities in the Strategic Plan 2019-2022:

Values:

Preserve, Protect and Enhance our Environment: To preserve, protect and enhance our natural environment for health benefits and enjoyment it provides present and future generations.

Achieve Sustainable Growth: To ensure that growth is managed so as to ensure a balances, sustainable, well planned community infrastructure and services to meet the needs of its residents and businesses.

The report is also closely linked with a number of Focus Areas/Priorities including Shaping Growth and Climate Change and Environment.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

CONSULTATION:

Planning staff will continue to consult with the different Town departments including Transportation and Public Works, Recreation and Parks, Economic Development, Climate Change, Finance and Fire and will continue to update the Senior Management Team and Council through the ROPR process.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

The Region will conduct consultation primarily through online engagement. An expanded 75- day consultation period from July 15 – September 28, 2020 will include:

- Discussion Papers and Landing Pages, which summarize the Discussion Papers, being posted on halton.ca/ropr
- The public will be able to provide their responses to questions posed and/or general comments using an online survey tool;
- Presentations to local municipal Councils on the Discussion Papers, as requested.
- Meetings with Advisory Committees;
- Public Information Centres, which will be held virtually, but following the same outline as a traditional Public Information Centre with an introduction, staff presentation and question/answer session. A technical moderator and a process

facilitator will be utilized. People who do not have access to the virtual meeting because they do not have the technology, are not comfortable with the technology, or have accessibility issues will be accommodated;

- Public Information Centre meeting materials and questions will be posted on halton.ca/ropr to allow people to provide input and comments after the sessions;
- Stakeholder meetings, which will be held using a virtual meeting format;
- Indigenous people's engagement undertaken on a case-by-case basis depending on the preferences of those communities; and
- Receipt of comments to the Regional Official Plan email account at ropr@halton.ca.

Public notification of future engagement opportunities will be promoted through the Region's website, newspaper advertisements, signboards, mailing lists, social media, stakeholder groups, and other means. Given that part of the engagement period is during the summer, most engagement activities will be focused in the month of September. Recognizing that the engagement plan may have to be adjusted in light of changes to COVID-19 restrictions, Regional staff will continue to monitor restrictions and make adjustments as needed.

Virtual Public Information Centre

Halton Region provided notice that a Virtual Public Information Centre (PIC) was being held regarding the Climate Change Discussion Paper. The PIC was held on September 3, 2020 from 7:00-9:00 pm. Town staff attended the PIC virtually. The format of the PIC included a presentation by Regional staff along with a Question and Answer period where members of the public e-mailed questions in advance to Regional staff, and provided them via the chat function during the PIC.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life.

The recommendation outlined in this report directly relates to the Land Use goals in Imagine Halton Hills under the Environmental Health pillar.

Overall, the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is:
GOOD

COMMUNICATIONS:

Upon Council approval of this report, a copy will be forwarded to the Region of Halton, the Local Municipalities of Burlington, Milton and Oakville, Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation and the Grand River Conservation Authority.

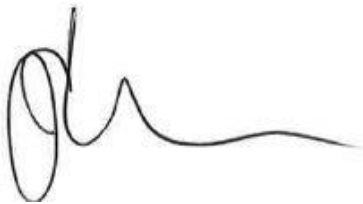
CONCLUSION:

The Town's responses to the discussion questions emphasize the Town's strategic goals and objectives, the unique character of Halton Hills and how planning for future growth must consider the climate change lens, the promotion of sustainable practices, and protecting the environment. Town staff looks forward to the on-going discussion through the public consultation phase and continuing to participate in the development of updated policies through the Regional Official Plan Review.

Reviewed and Approved by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bronwyn Parker".

Bronwyn Parker, Director of Planning Policy

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be "John Linhardt".

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Development

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be "Chris Mills".

Chris Mills, Acting Chief Administrative Officer