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Attachment #1 - Refer to LPS55-20



North Aldershot Planning Area Regional Official Plan Review

June 2020

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Context

The Regional Municipality of Halton has initiated a review of its Regional Official Plan (ROP) in accordance with the legislative requirements of the [Planning Act](#). The last comprehensive review of the ROP resulted in Regional Official Plan Amendments (ROPA) 37, 38 and 39, which implemented the policies of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006 and the Greenbelt Plan, 2005 amongst other key policy initiatives. The ROPR is being undertaken in three phases and the North Aldershot Planning Area Discussion Paper is part of Phase 2. Phase 2 will inform the development of ROP policies during the upcoming policy drafting phase of the ROPR (Phase 3).

Through this Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR), specific theme areas and policies will need to be updated, enhanced, and refined based on changing demographics, evolving land use trends, the [Provincial Policy Statement](#) (PPS), 2020 and the applicable 2017 Provincial Plans ([Greenbelt Plan](#) and [Niagara Escarpment Plan](#)) and [A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Golden Horseshoe](#), 2019. The ROPR also provides an opportunity for a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of existing policies and implementation through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process.

North Aldershot and the ROPR

The review of the North Aldershot area framework is one of the themes for the ROPR. North Aldershot has a long history as a distinct policy area that dates back to the 1970s. The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to review the existing policy framework in the ROP and consider whether it conforms to the current Provincial policy framework. Given that the current policy framework in the ROP has not been updated since 1996, changes to the ROP will be required.

Relationship with other ROPR Components

Through the Regional Official Plan Review exercise, updates to the ROP need to reflect the many changes to the PPS and provincial plans since the adoption of ROPA 38. The planning horizon and growth strategies are now extended to 2041, which has implications on where and how we grow in the Region. The Municipal Comprehensive Review will examine the interrelationship of growth, natural heritage systems, agricultural heritage systems and climate change, which are all key theme components of the review. The North Aldershot area review is impacted by the changes resulting from these key theme areas. This is discussed in detail throughout the discussion paper.

Discussion Paper Questions

The North Aldershot discussion paper includes discussion questions for consideration through the review of the policy framework. A summary of these questions can be found in Appendix A. The Region is requesting that the reader respond to these questions in their comments on the Discussion paper.

The North Aldershot Review Discussion Paper is one of five discussion papers being made available to support public input for the Regional Official Plan Review.

How to get Involved:

Please visit halton.ca/ropr to learn more and provide feedback.

The Regional Official Plan Review page contains more information to support participation as well as a questionnaire on the policy themes being considered by Regional Council.

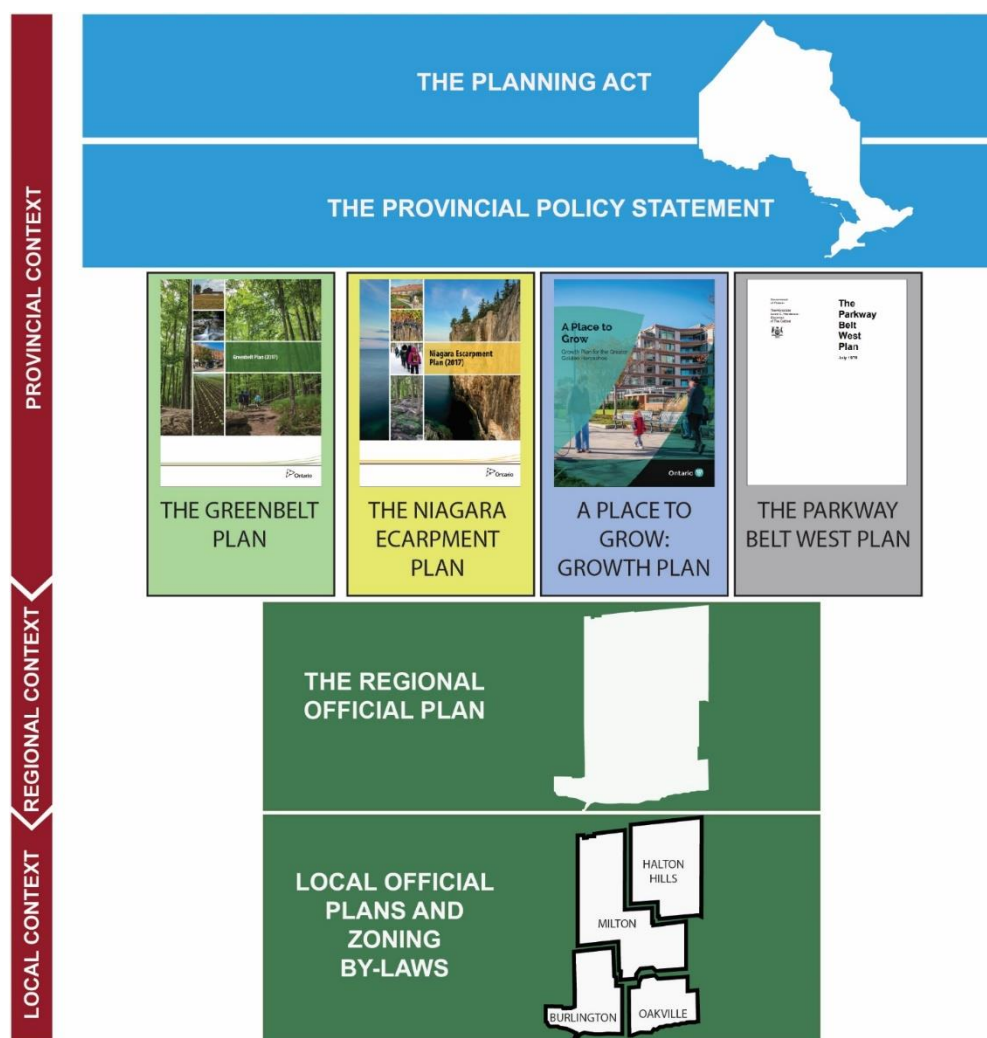
Comments can also be submitted to ropr@halton.ca.

1.0 Background

1.1 Regional Official Plan Review

The Regional Municipality of Halton is undertaking a Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) in accordance with Provincial requirements established in Section 26 of the [Planning Act](#). The last comprehensive review of the Regional Official Plan (ROP) resulted in Regional Official Plan Amendments (ROPA) 37, 38, and 39, which implemented the policies of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2006 and the Greenbelt Plan 2005, amongst other key policy initiatives. The general framework for land use planning in Halton is set out in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Ontario's Land Use Planning Framework as Applicable to Halton Region



The current ROPR will ensure consistency with the [Provincial Policy Statement](#) (PPS), 2020, as well as conformity to [A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#) (2019), the [Greenbelt Plan](#) (2017) and the [Niagara Escarpment Plan](#) (2017). These policies and plans include new directions for land use planning to identify actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change.

The ROPR is a three-phased process: Phase 1 was completed on October 2016 through the endorsement of “Phase 1: Directions Report” which outlined the tasks and deliverables to be undertaken during the remaining two phases of the ROPR. This Discussion Paper is one of five prepared as part of Phase 2 for the purpose of presenting analysis of potential options to address the ROPR key theme areas as per Figure 2. The work in Phase 2 will inform the development of ROP policies during the upcoming policy drafting phase of the ROPR (Phase 3).

Figure 2: ROPR Phase 2 key theme areas addressed through research, analysis and discussion papers.



1.2 The Unique Planning Context in North Aldershot

While the other four discussion papers deal with themes that apply to the whole of the Region, this discussion paper deals with a specific geography. The North Aldershot area in the City of Burlington has a long history as a distinct policy area that dates back to 1971 and many changes made to Provincial Policy since that time, which include directing development of water and sewer services to urban areas, have not been reflected in the policy framework. Changes to the Provincial Policy Statement in 2014 and more recently in 2020 have necessitated significant change to the policy framework in North Aldershot through the ROPR review. The ROPR will update the North Aldershot policy framework to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), 2020 and conform to a Place to Grow: The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019, the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 and the Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017.

As a consequence of the above, the North Aldershot area review is impacted by the decisions that will be made through the ROPR on growth management, the protection of natural heritage features and natural heritage systems, and the agricultural and rural area review and climate change.

The purpose of this discussion paper is to provide an overview of the current planning context that applies and to review the implications of the updated Provincial policies for growth management, natural heritage and development in agricultural and rural areas on North Aldershot. The implications of the current Provincial policy framework on North Aldershot are significant and will require the preparation of a substantially different policy framework for the area where North Aldershot will no longer be identified as having a distinct land use designation. The intent of this discussion paper is to begin the discussion on an appropriate policy framework to meet current requirements.

1.3 Relationship to other ROPR Components

Updates to the ROP need to reflect many changes in the PPS and Provincial Plans since the last ROP review. The planning horizon and growth strategies are now being extended to 2041, with implications being reviewed for the Urban Systems through Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS) Analysis with input from the Climate Change, Rural and Agriculture and NHS themes. The implications for each theme of the ROPR will have an impact on the North Aldershot area review component of the ROPR and are discussed in detail throughout this paper.

2.0 Background

2.1 Geography

The North Aldershot area is bounded by Highway 403 to the south, Highway 6 to the west and the Hamilton/Halton Region boundary (i.e. Niagara Escarpment Brow) to the north. The southern boundary extends northwards from Highway 403 to the east of Waterdown Road and follows the City of Burlington urban boundary with the east boundary corresponding to Kerns Road at the northeast corner. There are urban lands to the north, east and south border of the area with Waterdown urban area to the north, the Burlington urban area (i.e. Aldershot community) to the south and east and the well-travelled Highway 6 on the west. The North Aldershot area has a total land area of 1,365 hectares and is shown on Figure 3.

Figure 3- North Aldershot Planning Area



The North Aldershot area includes lands within the Parkway Belt West Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Greenbelt Plan areas. Figure 4, below, identifies how much of North Aldershot is the subject of three Provincial Plans.

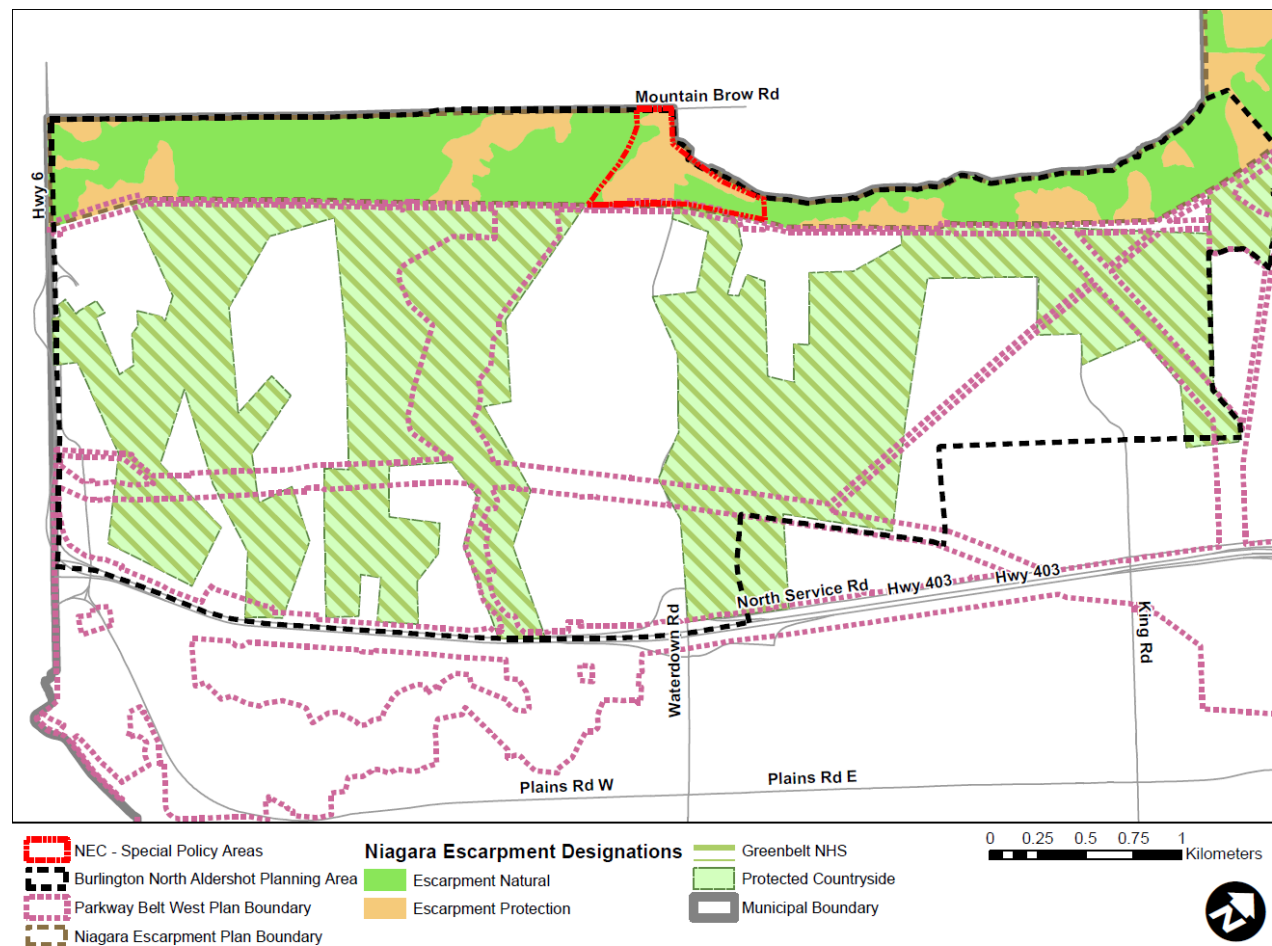
Figure 4: Total Area Impacted by Provincial Plans (hectares)

	Total Planning Area	Niagara Escarpment Plan*	Greenbelt Plan*	Parkway Belt West Plan*	Remaining lands
North Aldershot Area	1,365.30ha	235.98ha	598.43ha	195.69ha	335.2ha
Percentage of Area	100%	17.3%	43.8%	14.3%	24.6%

* Provincial Plans are not mutually exclusive

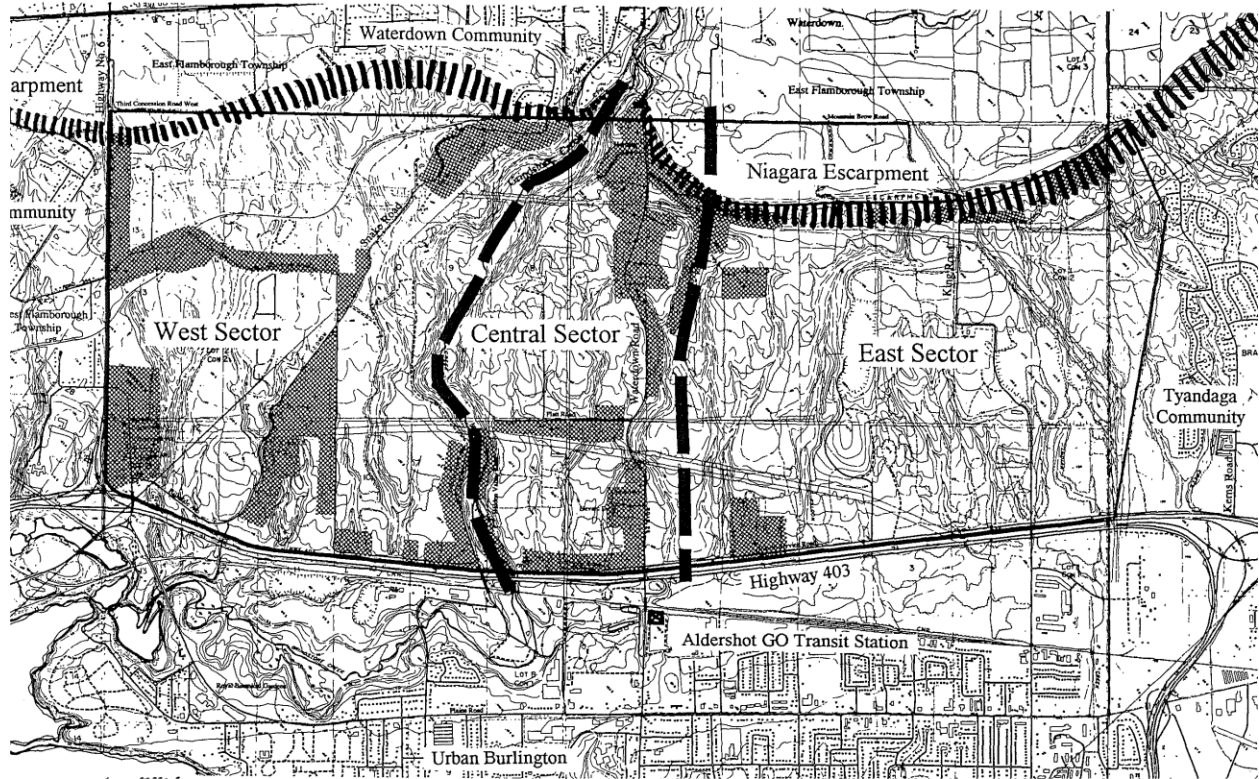
The figure above indicates that approximately 75.4% of North Aldershot is subject to three above Provincial Plans that place restrictions on the type of development that may occur. The limits of the three Provincial Plans impacting the North Aldershot area are shown in Figure 5 below, and are in addition to the Growth Plan, 2019 policy framework that applies to the North Aldershot lands. A more fulsome review of these three Provincial Plans is found in Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 of this discussion paper.

Figure 5: Limits of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Parkway Belt West Plan in the North Aldershot area



The planning and technical work completed in the early 1990's in North Aldershot resulted in the creation of the North Aldershot Policy Area (NAPA) and its division into three sectors, the West Sector, the Central Sector and the East Sector as shown on Figure 6 below and identified in the North Aldershot Inter-Agency Review report, 1994 (NAIR). A detailed discussion on the planning of North Aldershot since the early 1990's culminating in the NAIR report is discussed further in Section 2.2 below.

Figure 6: North Aldershot Area sectors (Source: NAIR, 1994)



There are two significant defining natural features present in North Aldershot. The first is the Niagara Escarpment that extends east west generally along the northern boundary of North Aldershot. The lands within North Aldershot slope down from the Niagara Escarpment towards Highway 403 with the difference in height being approximately 100 metres. The second defining feature is the Grindstone Creek and its tributaries, where water travels through steep valley systems on its way to Lake Ontario to the south. The division of North Aldershot into sectors is based on the location of these valley systems. It is noted that Indian Creek and its tributaries is also located in the East Sector.

Given North Aldershot's location between the Waterdown and Burlington urban areas and Highway 6, North Aldershot has taken on a distinctly unique character with a variety of land uses. North Aldershot is also the site of some extraordinary topography with the brow of the Niagara Escarpment being very prominent.

2.2 The Planning of North Aldershot

In 1991, interest was expressed to develop the central sector and in April 1992, an application to develop a residential community was submitted. In response to this application and because of the unique opportunities and constraints that existed at the

time, Burlington Council passed a resolution on November 23, 1992 endorsing the concept of undertaking an inter-agency review of North Aldershot.

The North Aldershot Inter-Agency Review (NAIR) was initiated in 1993. This study was carried out under the direction of Halton Region in partnership with the City of Burlington, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of the Environment, Halton Region Conservation Authority and the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which development should be permitted in North Aldershot.

The land use plan developed as part of the review concluded that additional development in the Central Sector could be supported from a servicing and environmental perspective in discrete pockets of land that were surrounded by environmental features. In this regard, the NAIR estimated that up to 550 new dwellings could potentially be developed in these pockets along with 45 additional infill houses along existing roads. It was also recommended that Waterdown Road not be widened to respect its current character.

For the West Sector, it was recommended that only limited infilling be permitted along existing roads. In this regard, it was suggested that the development of about 45 new dwellings could be accommodated in the West Sector. A similar recommendation was made for the East Sector and only limited infilling was suggested for this area as well, with up to 45 additional dwellings possible. The total number of dwelling units anticipated based on the land use concept was therefore up to a maximum of 640, assuming that only the Central Sector would be on full services.

The NAIR Study Final Report was endorsed by Regional Council in June, 1994 as the planning framework for the North Aldershot area. Regional Council directed staff to undertake the appropriate studies to consider the financial feasibility and servicing options for the NAIR study area. The options for servicing concluded that only limited areas of the NAIR study area would be feasible.

City of Burlington Council approved the North Aldershot Inter-Agency Study Final Report on June 13, 1994. By resolution, Burlington Council adopted the Land Use Concept contained in the Final Report as the framework for future land use in North Aldershot and directed staff to carry out the necessary studies and prepare an Official Plan Amendment to implement the recommended Land Use Concept.

One of these Amendments was Official Plan Amendment 197 ('OPA 197'), which applied to the Central Sector only, and which was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in 1996. The Central Sector was the site of about 135 dwellings at the time.

The goal of OPA 197 was to permit further development in the Central Sector on the basis that the subject lands are outside of the City's urban area and that the location and intensity of development shall be determined by compatibility with the existing character, landscape and environment. On this basis, it was clear at the time that anticipated development in the Central Sector would be located on lands that were outside of the City's urban area. This is supported by one of the objectives of OPA 197, which was to confirm Highway 403 as Burlington's northern urban boundary in the west part of the City.

OPA 197 included a series of land use designations for the Central Sector that were intended to guide the development of a range of uses in a manner that was sensitive to the natural environment (larger and varied lot sizes, maximum lot coverage etc.). These policies collectively permitted over 500 dwelling units in a number of sub-areas, with all of the sub-areas except one, required to be serviced by full municipal services. Only the Central Area was the subject of a detailed planning process at the time.

Halton Region Official Plan Amendment Two ('ROPA 2') established the North Aldershot Policy Area, which was adopted by Council on June 3, 1998 and approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs on November 17, 1998. ROPA 2 came after OPA 197 and the policies included in the Regional Official Plan by ROPA 2 have not been updated since that time. Given the significant changes to Provincial plans since 1998 and the most recent changes to the PPS, 2020 and Growth Plan, 2019 the North Aldershot policy framework is being reviewed to address conformity to those plans.

2.3 Current Regional Policy Framework

The North Aldershot Policy Area policies under Sections 137 to 139 of the current ROP remain unchanged from the policies introduced through ROPA 2 which are from 1998. The objectives of the North Aldershot Policy Area are to:

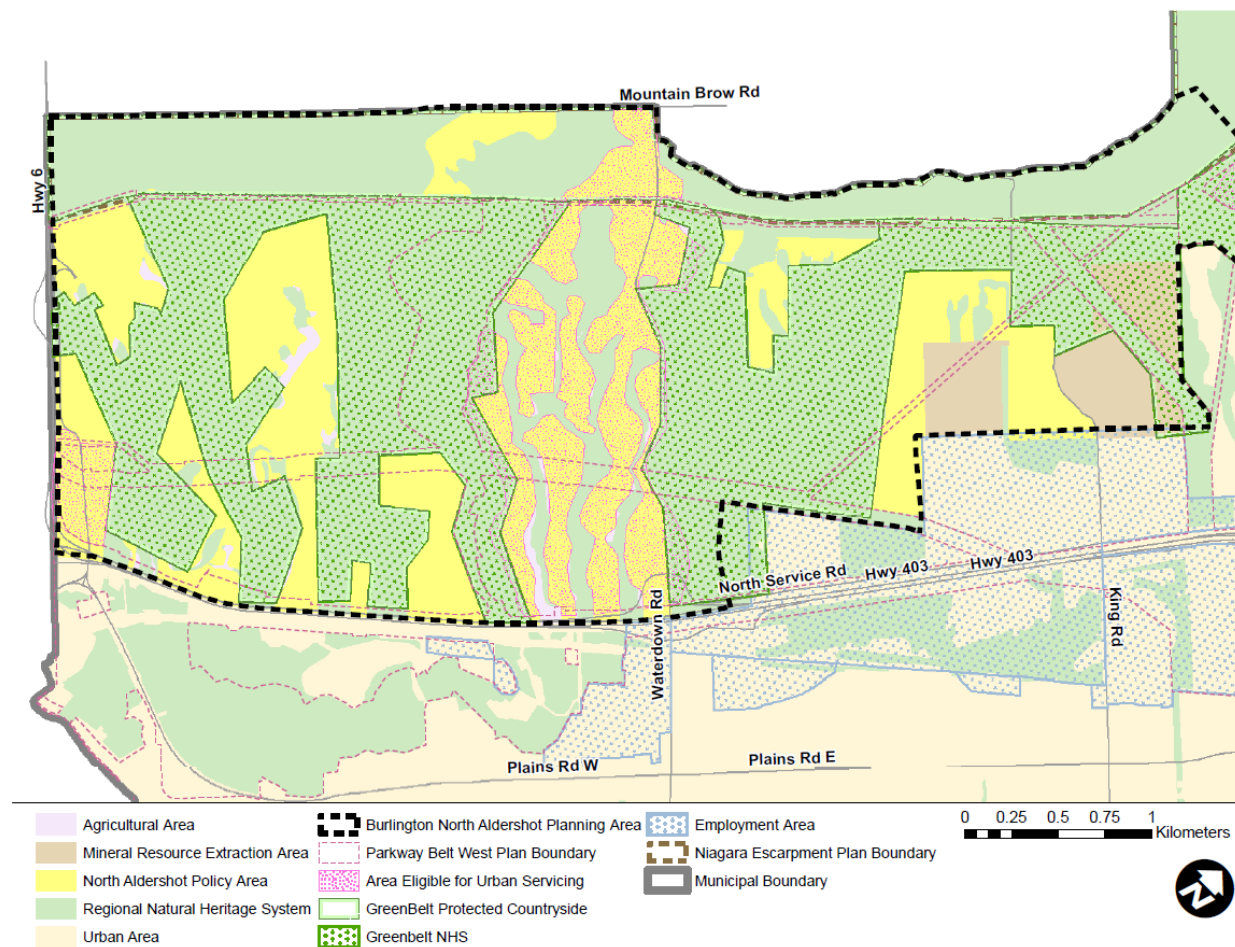
- Recognize and maintain the distinct and unique character of the North Aldershot area within the context of the surrounding built-up area; and,
- Provide for a limited amount of development in certain locations while preserving significant natural areas and maintaining the predominantly rural and open space character of the landscape.

The ROP permits a range of uses in the North Aldershot Policy Area. One of these is identified in Section 138(14) – which indicates that permitted uses included those “permitted in local Official Plan and zoning by-laws established in accordance with the planning framework set out in the North Aldershot Inter-Agency Review Final Report

(May 1994).” This framework identified the areas within North Aldershot that would be ‘Area Eligible for Urban Services’ and is shown on Map 1 of the ROP and reproduced here as Figure 7.

A portion of the North Aldershot Policy Area Eligible for Urban Services extends into the Niagara Escarpment Plan from the Hydro Right of Way northerly to Mountain Brow Road. Further discussion on the policy framework within the Niagara Escarpment Plan is discussed in Section 3.4 below.

Figure 7: Reproduced North Aldershot Area in ROP Map 1



The urban (Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment) services policies under section 87 to 89 of the ROP indicate that:

“the goal for urban services is to ensure the adequate provision of an economic level of urban services to achieve Regional development objectives while conscious of the need to protect the environment.”

Additional policies in the ROP indicate that the Region is to provide urban services only within the Urban Areas, unless otherwise permitted by specific policies. Section 89(21) of the ROP prohibits the extension of urban services beyond the boundaries of the urban areas with certain exceptions including those designated locations within the North Aldershot Policy Area shown on Figure 7 above and in accordance with Section 139(3) of the ROP. Section 139(3) of the ROP states:

“It is the policy of the Region to:

Permit the extension of urban services to those locations within the North Aldershot Policy Area shown as “Eligible for Urban Services” on Map 1 provided that:

- feasibility study has been prepared to the satisfaction of the Region;
- Regional Council deems it prudent to extend services;
- the landowners/developer has met the financial obligations as specified by the Region; and,
- sufficient servicing capacity is available as determined by the Region.”

Specific policies of the ROP indicate that the extension of urban services to areas within the North Aldershot Policy Area as Eligible for Urban Services within the Central and West sectors, can only be done provided that each of the four conditions established in Section 139(3) are met.

In this regard, the ROP requires that a feasibility study be prepared to the satisfaction of the Region, requires that Council deem it prudent to extend services, that the landowners meet the financial obligations specified by the Region and that there is sufficient servicing capacity as determined by the Region.

The ROP currently establishes the following mutually exclusive land use designations, which are:

- Urban area;
- Agricultural area (which includes prime and non-prime agricultural lands)
- Hamlets
- Mineral Resource Extraction Areas;
- Regional Waterfront Parks;

- Regional Natural Heritage System; and
- The North Aldershot Policy Area.

In this regard, the ROP continues to recognize the North Aldershot Policy Area as a distinct mutually exclusive land use designation from the Urban Area.

2.4 Current City of Burlington Policy Framework

The City of Burlington’s Official Plan was adopted by City Council on July 11, 1994 and was subsequently approved with modifications by the Region of Halton on March 5, 1997. Additional amendments to the Burlington Official Plan include Official Plan Amendment No. 55 (OPA 55) which included the North Aldershot Area policies and mapping to the City’s Official Plan.

The Burlington Official Plan contains a dedicated section on North Aldershot and Schedule D of the Burlington Official Plan establishes a number of land use designations in North Aldershot as set out in Figure 8 below:

Figure 8: Schedule D of the Burlington Official Plan for North Aldershot



Some of the development land in the East and West Sectors is designated Infill Residential, with the minimum lot size being 0.8 hectares, or larger as required. These areas generally correspond to the areas adjacent to the roads in both sectors. However,

a considerable amount of land in both the East and West Sectors is designated North Aldershot Special Study Area, which requires the completion of a number of studies with recommendations that would need to be incorporated into the Burlington Official Plan by way of an Official Plan Amendment. The policies also establish permissions for commercial uses in the North Aldershot Commercial designation that applies to the Bridgeview Survey along Highway 6 and office uses in the North Aldershot Office designation at the Waterdown Road/Highway 403 interchange.

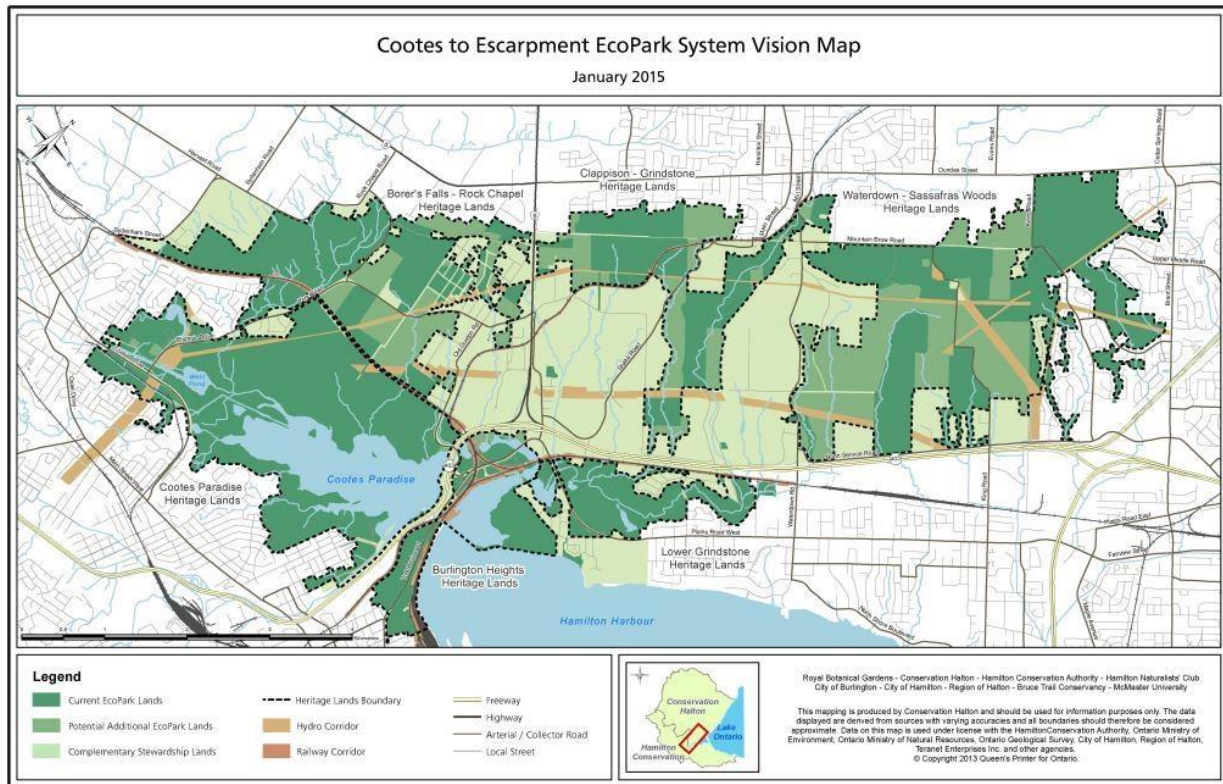
The boundaries of the designations and permissions that apply in the Central Sector are from OPA 197 that was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in 1996. The designations and permissions as a result of OPA 197 includes a portion of the lands within the Niagara Escarpment Plan that are identified as Area Eligible for Urban Servicing in the ROP.

The Burlington Official Plan was updated by OPA 55 which was adopted in 2006 and approved in parts in 2008 and 2009. A portion of OPA 55 was deferred as it relates to the Central Sector (Deferral D48) meaning that the policies of OPA 197 (pre-OPA 55) continues to apply on the lands subject to the deferral. The Official Plan was reviewed again in the mid-2000's and a new Official Plan was adopted in April 2018 to bring the City of Burlington Official Plan in conformity to ROPA 38. The adopted OP is currently before the Region for approval.

2.5 Land Use by Sector

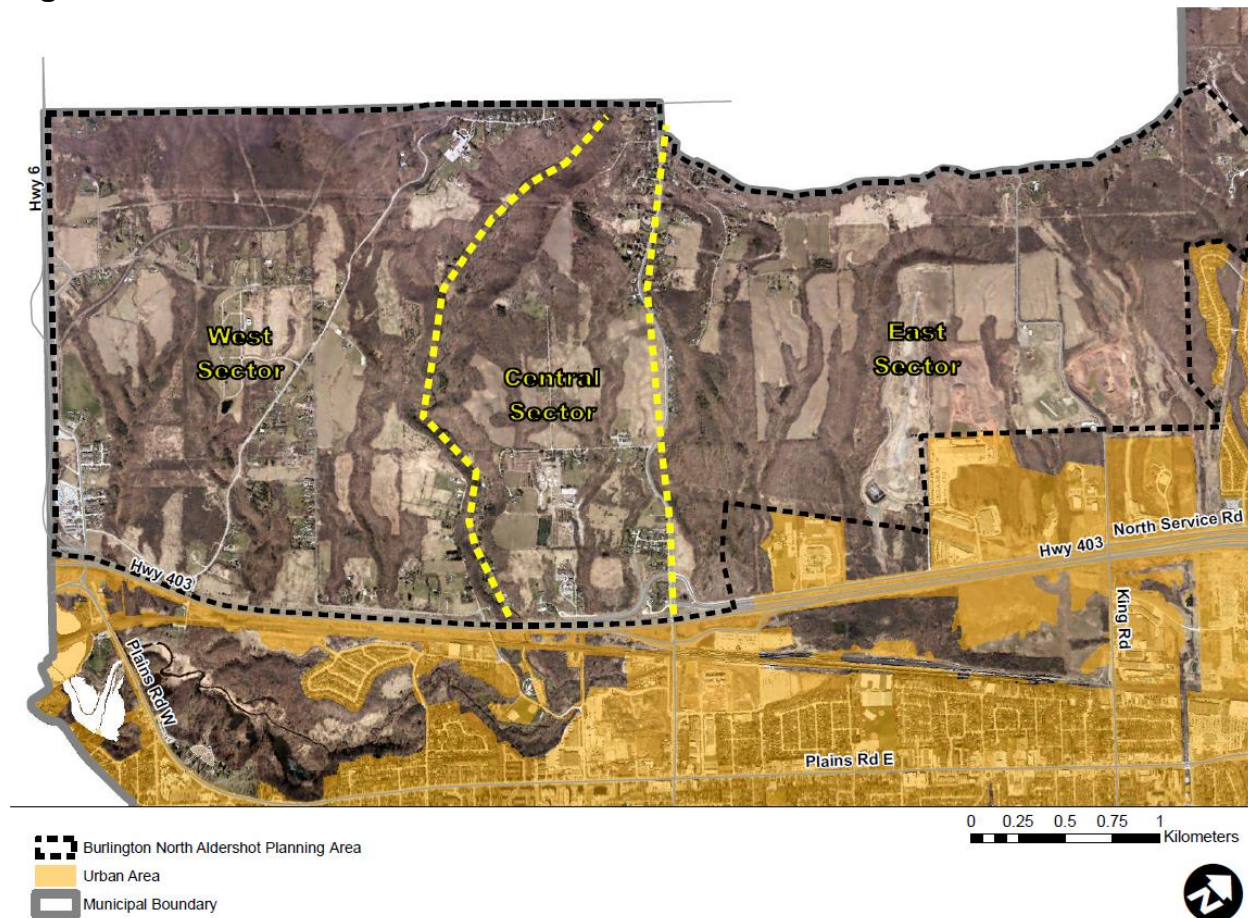
Furthering the distinct nature of the North Aldershot area, approximately 30.6% of the land in North Aldershot is owned by public agencies, including the Region of Halton, City of Burlington and Conservation Halton. These areas have been acquired for the most part to ensure their long-term protection. The Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark system, shown on Figure 9 below, encompassing the North Aldershot area is an innovative partnership to protect, connect and restore natural lands and open space between the Niagara Escarpment and Cootes Paradise in Hamilton Harbour. The EcoPark system encompasses a significant amount of land within North Aldershot. The Natural Heritage System Discussion paper includes a discussion on the recognition of the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System in Official Plan policies.

Figure 9: Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System Vision Map, January, 2015



Below is a more detailed description of the land uses in North Aldershot by sector as established in the NAIR. See Figure 10.

Figure 10: Sectors in North Aldershot Area



West Sector

The West Sector is the site of some residential development along Snake Road, York Road, Old York Road and Lemonville Road. The West Sector is fragmented by deep north-south ravines and valleys associated with the Grindstone Creek and its tributaries, which are located within the Greenbelt Plan area. Much of the tableland has been cleared for farming and other uses. In the very northern portion of this sector the escarpment brow dominates.

In the southwest corner of the West Sector, adjacent to the City of Hamilton, is the Bridgeview Survey. This area contains a number of homes on side streets intersecting with Plains Road West. A water and wastewater servicing review prepared by the Regional Health Department in 1988 for the Bridgeview Survey area found numerous health related problems in both systems. At the time, all residents in this area were on private water and wastewater systems. As a result of the Health Department Study, a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment study was completed in 1991, which

assessed alternative options for water and wastewater servicing in this area. The preferred servicing strategy included municipal water servicing from the City of Hamilton (Hamilton-Wentworth at the time) and municipal sewers connecting to the Halton Region wastewater network on Plains Road. This servicing strategy was constructed and put into service in 1994.

Inter-regional water servicing from the City of Hamilton to the Bridgeview Survey area in Halton is governed by the Halton-Hamilton Water Supply Agreement. The first formal water supply agreement was negotiated between Halton Region and the City of Hamilton in 1998. Since the 1998 agreement, two additional City of Hamilton water connection points have been added (Snake Road Distribution System and North Aldershot Distribution System). The current Halton-Hamilton Water Supply Agreement (signed in 2011) was renewed in 2019 (per Regional Council report PW-26-19) and will be in place until 2031. The agreement allows for a maximum taking of one (1) mega-litre per day (ML/d) and a maximum flow rate of 7.95 ML/d (peak hour basis) from the Hamilton system.

Similar to the Bridgeview Survey area, there are residents on Snake Road in the north part of the West Sector (adjacent to the village of Waterdown) who receive water from the City of Hamilton through a connection on Snake Road (south end of Thompson Drive). Unlike the Bridgeview Survey area, however, Snake Road residents are not connected to the Halton Region wastewater system. Residences use private septic systems for wastewater treatment.

Extensive lands along the east boundary of the West Sector are in public ownership and are within the Parkway Belt West Plan. There are no existing municipal services in this area.

North of the West Sector, in the City of Hamilton, is an extensive commercial and industrial area focused on the intersection of Highways 5 and 6 otherwise known as Clappison's Corners. However, there are three residential properties that are contiguous to the City of Hamilton, situated on the south side of Mountainbrow Road. These properties are within the boundary of the City of Burlington and have no existing municipal services.

Central Sector

The Central Sector is oriented to Waterdown Road and stretches between Highway 403 and the Hamilton/Halton Region boundary (at Mountain Brow Road). Waterdown Road is a historic road that connects the Village of Waterdown to the City of Burlington as well as the Aldershot GO Station and as a result, it is a busy commuter road. Large homes line Waterdown Road for much of its length and a number of side streets are also the site of

a variety of housing types. Municipal water services have been extended along the length of Waterdown Road and along Craven Avenue, Flatt Road, and a portion of Old Waterdown Road. Halton Region sewer services have been extended to the lower portion of Waterdown Road, while the remainder of residents remain on private septic systems. There are about 165 dwellings in the Central Sector.

Municipal water servicing in the Central Sector dates back to 1972, when an agreement was established between the former Village of Waterdown and the Burlington Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to supply the Village with water from the City of Burlington Water Supply System. As a result of this agreement, a pumping station was constructed at the Waterdown Road Reservoir and a 250 mm diameter feedermain was constructed from the Waterdown Road Reservoir northerly on Waterdown Road to the former Village of Waterdown. Residents along Waterdown Road were originally supplied with municipal water through connections to this feedermain. Later, water originating from the City of Hamilton's Woodward Avenue Water Treatment Plant was supplied to Waterdown, and the feedermain on Waterdown Road became an inter-regional connection between the Hamilton and Halton systems. Today, Halton residents in the Waterdown Road area are serviced primarily with water from the City of Hamilton's supply (governed by the Hamilton-Halton Water Supply Agreement, outlined above), with a second feed from the Halton Water Supply system that is available if the City of Hamilton supply is interrupted.

East Sector

The East Sector is mostly undeveloped and is the site of extensive wooded areas. Two former waste disposal sites (one owned by the Region and the other by the City of Burlington) are located in the East Sector on both sides of a brick plant located on the North Service Road and in the Burlington urban area.

There are also lands designated for mineral resource extraction in the East Sector. Valley lands located along the east boundary and corresponding to Upper Hager Creek are owned by the City of Burlington and an extensive area in the northern portion of the East Sector known as the Waterdown Woods is owned by Conservation Halton.

3.0 Provincial Policy Framework

3.1 Provincial Policy Statement, 2020

As noted above, the North Aldershot Inter-Agency Review (NAIR) was completed in 1994. Since that time, the Provincial Policy Framework has evolved significantly, with the latest update being the PPS in 2020, which will come into effect on May 1, 2020.

The PPS, 2020 divides the Province into two general land use categories with one being urban 'settlement areas' and the second being 'rural area', with rural areas including rural settlement areas, rural lands, prime agricultural areas, natural heritage features and areas and resource areas. Rural lands and prime agricultural areas are considered to be mutually exclusive, with rural lands not encompassing prime agricultural areas.

The PPS, 2020 limits development within prime agricultural areas and permits only residential development, including lot creation, on rural lands that is locally appropriate. Section 1.1.3.1 of the PPS, 2020 indicates that settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development, and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted. There are no transition provisions in the PPS and the PPS applies to all decisions in respect to a planning matter on or after May 1, 2020, including any decision made to change ROP policies and on a Planning Act application in North Aldershot.

As noted in the previous section, the North Aldershot Polciy Area is not within an Urban Area according to the ROP and would therefore not be within an urban settlement area. Instead, it is a mutually exclusive land use designations, with the others being Urban Area, Agricultural Area (which includes prime and non-prime agricultural lands), Hamlets, Mineral Resource Extraction Areas, Regional Waterfront Parks, and the Regional Natural Heritage System.

The lands within North Aldershot are also not considered to be within the Agricultural System according to the ROP. While agricultural uses do occur within North Aldershot, the lands are not considered to be within a prime agricultural area, which is typically made up of large tracts of contiguous land that have the right soils and climate to support viable agriculture. North Aldershot also cannot be considered a rural settlement area in the Halton Region context, since rural settlement areas are solely those areas identified as hamlets or rural clusters by the ROP. This means that the lands within North Aldershot would be considered to be rural lands within the rural area category established by the PPS, 2020.

Section 1.1.5.2 of the PPS permits a number of uses on rural lands including residential development that is locally appropriate, home occupations and home industries.

While residential development that is locally appropriate is permitted on rural lands, the entirety of the PPS, 2020 must be considered in making a determination on whether lot creation on rural lands is appropriate in Halton Region, which has large urban areas that have long been the focus of growth. In addition, planning decisions in Halton Region must also conform to Provincial Plans, such as the Growth Plan, 2019, which places limits on development and lot creation on rural lands. In this regard, the PPS, 2020 states that Provincial Plans take precedence over the policies of the PPS, 2020 to the extent of any conflict. In addition, the PPS, 2020 states the following:

“Where the policies of provincial plans address the same, similar, related, or overlapping matters as the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement, applying the more specific policies of the provincial plan satisfies the more general requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement.”

Of particular interest to decision-makers in implementing the PPS, 2020 is whether a particular policy incorporates the word “shall”, “should”, “promote” or “encourage”. The latter three are enabling or supportive, while the first (shall) when applied to a policy is a directive, limitation or prohibition. With respect to the review of the North Aldershot Policy framework, below is a list of a few of the relevant directives, limitations and prohibitions (using the word 'shall') from the PPS, 2020 that will need to be considered:

- **Section 1.1.3.1** – Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development.
- **Section 1.1.4.2** - In rural areas, rural settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.
- **Section 1.6.1 – Infrastructure** and public services facilities shall be provided in an efficient manner that prepares for the impacts of a changing climate while accommodating projected needs.
- **Section 1.6.6.1 a) 1.** – Planning for sewage and water services shall... accommodate forecasted growth in a manner that promotes the efficient use and optimization of existing:...municipal sewage services and municipal water services.

The directives above deal with the location of growth and development and the provision of infrastructure. There are other directives in the PPS, 2020 on natural heritage that also need to be considered are reviewed in Section 4.0 of this discussion paper.

3.2 Growth Plan, 2019

In 2005, the Province adopted the Places To Grow Act. This legislation provided a framework for the adoption of regional-scale Growth Plans. The first of these, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, was adopted by Regulation in June 2006.

The intent of the Growth Plan is to significantly reduce urban sprawl and land consumption while making more efficient use of existing infrastructure. The first Growth Plan required that municipalities look to new ways to accommodate growth that breaks from the past, in terms of how communities are designed, and how land uses are mixed, in an effort to improve quality of life, health and general well-being.

Since 2006, the Growth Plan has been amended a number of times and was significantly updated in 2017 and then in 2019. The Growth Plan, 2019 which directs growth related planning decisions to 2041, complements the PPS, 2020 and its directive that settlement areas shall be the focus of growth. In this regard, Section 2.2.1.2 d) firstly indicates that “development will be directed to settlement areas, except where the policies of this Plan permit otherwise” and then Section 2.2.1.2 (a) indicates the following:

“The vast majority of growth will be directed to settlement areas that:

- i. have a delineated built boundary;
- ii. have existing or planned municipal water and wastewater systems; and
- iii. can support the achievement of complete communities.”

The above means that the focus of development is on those settlement areas that meet the three above listed criteria.

Section 2.2.1.2 b) then indicates that growth will be limited in settlement areas that are rural settlements. No component of North Aldershot can be considered a rural settlement in accordance with the definition of rural settlement in the Growth Plan:

“Existing hamlets or similar existing small settlement areas that are long-established and identified in official plans. These communities are serviced by individual private on-site water and/or private wastewater systems, contain a limited amount of undeveloped lands that are designated for development and are subject to official plan policies that limit growth. All settlement areas that are identified as hamlets in the Greenbelt Plan, as rural settlements in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, or as minor urban centres in

the Niagara Escarpment Plan are considered rural settlements for the purposes of this Plan, including those that would not otherwise meet this definition."

Rural settlements are existing hamlets or similar existing small settlement areas that are long established and identified in Official Plans. As noted above, the ROP does not identify any part of the North Aldershot area as being within a hamlet or rural cluster, which is how rural settlements have been classified in the ROP. Section 2.2.1.2 f) of the Growth Plan, 2019 further states that the establishment of new settlement areas, which by definition includes rural settlements, is prohibited.

On the basis of the above, the Growth Plan, 2019 makes it clear that vast majority of growth will be directed to settlement areas and that growth will be limited in rural settlements. Given that the North Aldershot is not included within any type of settlement area, this means that the current policies that permit development potentially on urban services outside of the urban area in the ROP would not conform to the Growth Plan, 2019.

The Growth Plan, 2019 is more restrictive than the PPS, 2020 with respect to what is permitted on rural lands as set out in Section 2.2.9.3 below:

"Subject to the policies in Section 4, development outside of settlement areas may be permitted on rural lands for:

- a) The management or use of resources;
- b) Resource-based recreational uses; and
- c) Other rural land uses that are not appropriate in settlement areas provided they:
 - I. Are compatible with the rural landscape and surrounding local land uses;
 - II. Will be sustained by rural service levels; and
 - III. Will not adversely affect the protection of agricultural uses and other resource-based uses such as mineral aggregate operations."

While, the PPS, 2020 permits residential development, including lot creation, that is locally appropriate on rural lands, this permission is not specifically incorporated as a broad permission in the Growth Plan, 2019.

The policy framework in Section 3.2.6 of the Growth Plan, 2019 requires that opportunities for optimization and improved efficiency within existing municipal water and wastewater systems will be prioritized and that these systems will serve growth in a manner that supports achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets on the Growth Plan, 2019.

The Growth Plan, 2019 also includes a number of policies on natural heritage that have a significant impact on the North Aldershot area. The Growth Plan, 2019 states that:

“As provided in the Places to Grow Act, 2005, where there is a conflict between the Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation, or Niagara Escarpment Plans and this Plan regarding the natural environment or human health, the direction that provides more protection to the natural environment or human health prevails.”

The impact of the Growth Plan, 2019 natural heritage policies that impact the North Aldershot area are discussed further in Section 4.0 below.

3.3 Greenbelt Plan, 2017

In 2005, the Province of Ontario created the Greenbelt Plan, to permanently protect approximately 728,000+ hectares (1.8 million acres) of agricultural lands and ecological features/systems, from urban development, within the Greater Golden Horseshoe and beyond. The Greenbelt Plan was updated in 2017. The Greenbelt Plan applies to about 598.43 hectares within the North Aldershot area, which translates into 43.8% of the land area as shown on Figure 5 above. All of the lands within the Greenbelt Plan area in North Aldershot are within the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System (with some very minor exceptions).

The Greenbelt Plan, 2017 vision and policies provides protection of land from the loss and fragmentation of the agricultural land base, provides protection of natural heritage and water resource systems, and builds resilience to and mitigates climate change.

The Greenbelt Area includes the Greenbelt Plan Area and the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area with a separate distinct policy framework. While the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 includes land within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area, the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 policies generally do not apply to these lands, policies of the Niagara Escarpment Plan apply within the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area.

The Greenbelt Plan is made up of two primary designations - Protected Countryside and Urban River Valleys. The Protected Countryside is composed of an Agricultural System and a Natural System, together with a series of settlement areas. All of the lands within North Aldershot that are subject to the Greenbelt Plan are within the Protected

Countryside and within the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System (GBNHS) (with some very minor exceptions), which generally limits new development within and adjacent to key features through Section 3.2.2 Natural Heritage System Policies of the Greenbelt Plan, 2017. The policies of the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System have strict prohibitions unless exemptions apply, as well as the requirement to establish minimum vegetation protection zones. Refinements to the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System are not permitted except as a result of amendments to the Greenbelt Plan, 2017. However, refinements to the boundaries of the key features within the GBNHS may be considered following the guidance of the Province's Technical Paper 1 (OMNR, 2012).

For lands within the Protected Countryside, Schedules 1, 2 and 3 of the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 establishes whether the lands under consideration are located within a specialty crop area or a Town/Village and Hamlet. The lands subject to the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 in North Aldershot are not within a specialty crop area or an identified Town/Village or Hamlet on Schedule 1 of the Greenbelt Plan.

Given that the North Aldershot areas within the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 are not within a Town/Village or Hamlet, the lands are therefore within the Agricultural System. The Agricultural system is comprised of three categories – Specialty Crop Area, Prime Agricultural Area and Rural Area.

There are no Specialty Crop Areas or Prime Agricultural Areas in North Aldershot and therefore, the lands subject to the Greenbelt Plan in North Aldershot would be within the Rural Area. As a consequence of the above, Section 3.1.4 of the Greenbelt Plan (Rural Area policies) would apply and in Section 3.1.4.1 the following with respect to permitted uses is indicated:

"Rural lands support and provide the primary locations for a range of recreational, tourism, institutional (including cemetery) and resource-based commercial/ industrial uses. They also contain many historic highway commercial, non-farm residential and other uses which, in more recent times, would be generally directed to settlement areas but which are recognized as existing uses by this Plan and allowed to continue and expand subject to the policies of section 4.5. Notwithstanding this policy, official plans may be more restrictive than this Plan with respect to the types of uses permitted on rural lands, subject to the policies of Section 5.3."

As a general policy, the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 indicates in Section 3.1.4.5 that new multiple lots or units for residential development (e.g. estate residential subdivisions and adult lifestyle or retirement communities) whether by plan of subdivision, condominium or severance, shall not be permitted on rural lands.

3.4 Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017

The first Niagara Escarpment Plan ('NEP') was prepared by the Niagara Escarpment Commission in 1985 and it has been updated from time to time as required to deal with emerging policy issues and site-specific development applications. The NEP was in place at the time the North Aldershot Inter-Agency Review report was completed in 1994. In 2017, a significantly updated NEP was released. The NEP applies to about 235.98 hectares within North Aldershot and shown on Figure 5 above, which translates into 17.3% of the land area. The NEP contains a number of policies on the individual natural features that are found within the NEP area. As a result, and in the case of Halton Region, the ROP has established a Regional Natural Heritage System (RNHS) that extends into the NEP.

Map 3 of the NEP specifically identifies the North Aldershot Policy Area and includes lands within the North Aldershot Policy Area in the Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Protection Area designations, which are the two most restrictive designations in the NEP. Section 2.2 (Development Criteria) indicates the following in sub-section 17:

"Notwithstanding the policies of Part 2.2, development may occur in accordance with the land use policies set out in Amendment No. 197 to the City of Burlington Official plan in the area identified as the North Aldershot Policy Area on Map 3 to the Niagara Escarpment Plan."

The NEP contains a number of policies that apply to the North Aldershot Area including development criteria for development affecting water resources, development affecting natural heritage, infrastructure, scenic resources and landform conservation.

The NEP contains special provisions for the North Aldershot Policy Area designation for lot creation in accordance with the land use policies set out in the Burlington Official Plan Amendment No. 197 which was later updated by OPA 55. The NEP further states that notwithstanding the lot creation provisions for the Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Protection Area, new lots may be created in accordance with the land use policies set out in the Burlington Official Plan in the area identified as the North Aldershot Policy Area on Map 3 of the NEP (which is also identified as a Special Policy Area on Schedule D to the Burlington Official Plan).

The NEP protects the natural environment while only allowing for compatible development. The plan recognizes the importance of the natural heritage system of the Niagara Escarpment which includes all wetlands, significant woodlands and the habitat of endangered and threatened species and ANSIs are all considered key natural heritage features in the NEP area. The NEP plan does not permit development with the

exception of a single dwelling if the policies of the NEP are met. Section 2.7.2. e) of the NEP only permits infrastructure in the NEP key natural heritage features “where it has been deemed necessary to the public interest and there is no other alternative”.

Section 2.12.7 of the Niagara Escarpment Plan prohibits the extension of water and wastewater systems to be extended into the Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Protection Area unless servicing is required to address a failed system, or to ensure the protection of public health where there is a public health concern associated with the existing services. The NEP further states that the capacity of services provided should the exemption tests be met, be restricted to only what is required to service the affected area and not allow for growth or development beyond what is permitted by the NEP. Two applications to amend the NEP for 66 Horning Road and 768 Mountain Brow Road have been granted to permit the connection to urban services. Any other lands in the North Aldershot Policy Area within the NEP would need to meet the exemptions set out in 2.12.7 and 2.12.8 of the NEP.

3.5 Parkway Belt West Plan, 1978

The Parkway Belt West Plan applies to lands within the Highway 403 right-of-way, lands within the three hydro transmission lines that cross the North Aldershot area and certain lands within the Grindstone Creek valley extending from Highway 403 northwards to the boundary of the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. These lands are identified as Public Open Space and Buffer Area within the Public Use Area of the Parkway Belt West. New residential development is not permitted in the Public Use designation. The Parkway Belt West Plan applies to about 195.69 hectares within North Aldershot and shown on Map 2 above, which translates into 14.3% of the land area.

4.0 Natural Heritage System Considerations

4.1 Introduction

As noted in Section 2.3 of this discussion paper, the ROP permits a range of uses in the North Aldershot Policy Area. ROP Section 138(14) indicates that permitted uses included those “permitted in local Official Plan and zoning by-laws established in accordance with the planning framework set out in the North Aldershot Inter-Agency Review Final Report (May 1994).”

In this regard, the City of Burlington Official Plan contains policies that permit various intensities of residential, office, institutional and commercial development within different areas of the North Aldershot Policy Area.

The work completed in 1994 recognized that about 55% of the land area within North Aldershot was environmentally sensitive and should be protected. Much of this land was identified as being within a number of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's) at the time. Other areas that were sensitive to development particularly within the east and west sectors were identified as requiring further study and some of these areas are now designated North Aldershot Special Study Area in the Burlington Official Plan.

On the basis of a review of the land use concept in the NAIR, 1994, Schedule K of the adopted City of Burlington Official Plan (2018) and Map 1 of the ROP (2009), all of the lands recommended for Environmental Protection in 1994 are collectively included within the:

- Greenbelt Plan Natural Heritage System (GBNHS);
- The Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Protection Area designations in the Niagara Escarpment Plan (with some of these lands being within the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System);
- The Parkway Belt West Plan; and,
- The Regional Natural Heritage System (RNHS) in the ROP, which also extends into the Greenbelt Plan area and the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area as a Special Policy area.

Minor refinements to the boundary of the Environmental Protection Area initially identified in 1994 have been made over time in response to the submission of more detailed studies and/or the dedication of lands to a public authority.

This means that the lands initially recommended for protection are for the most part within Provincial Plans that limit development and/or are subject to the policies applying to the Regional Natural Heritage System in the ROP that also limit development. It is also noted that there are some very minor discrepancies between the Environmental Protection Area designation on Schedule K of the Burlington Official Plan and Map 1 of the ROP (2009) and this may be due to the different scale of the maps.

4.2 Refinements to the Regional Natural Heritage System

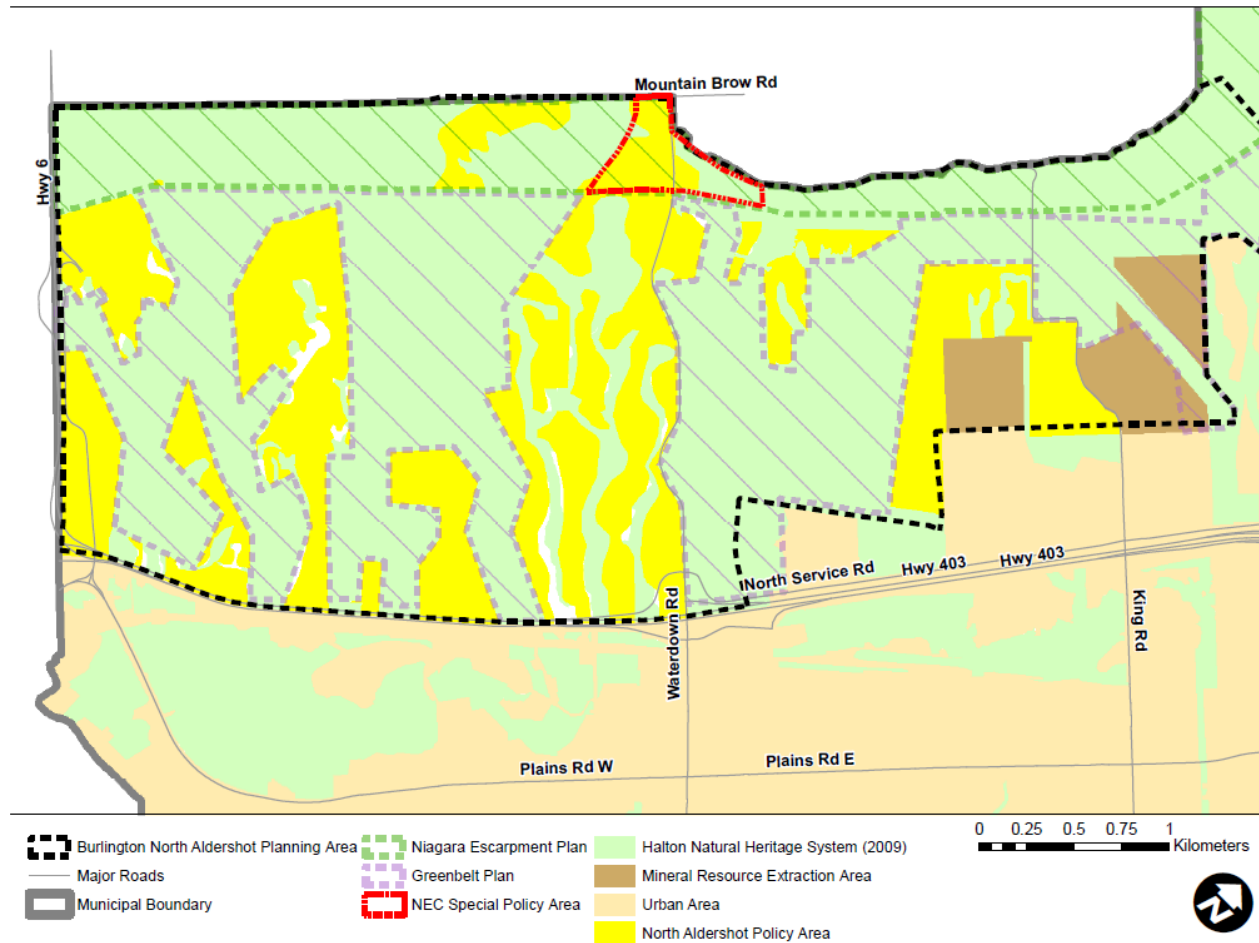
4.2.1 Regional Natural Heritage System, 2009

As set out in the Natural Heritage discussion paper, the current mapping (2009) in the ROP is based on the NHS mapping delineated as part of the Sustainable Halton exercise in preparation for ROPA 38.

As part of the current Municipal Comprehensive Review, the opportunity exists to refine the 2009 NHS maps (Maps 1 and 1G in the ROP) and policies to reflect the current Regional and Provincial policies that define Halton's NHS. It has also been determined that there are some minor inconsistencies in the extent of the Region's NHS between Maps 1 and 1G that need to be resolved. Addressing these concerns will occur as part of the mapping update to reflect planning decisions that have been made since ROPA 38, OMB decisions, updates to base map layers provided by the Province and/or Conservation authorities and the incorporation of new Provincial mapping including the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (NHSGP). Undertaking these mapping refinements is essential to provide transparent mapping that accurately reflects the policy structure, current state of science and incorporates the most current data available. A detailed overview of the NHS mapping refinements can be found in the Natural Heritage Discussion paper.

At the present time, Map 1 of the ROP includes the following lands within North Aldershot in the RNHS as shown on Figure 11 below.

Figure 11 - 2009 Regional Natural Heritage System in the North Aldershot Area



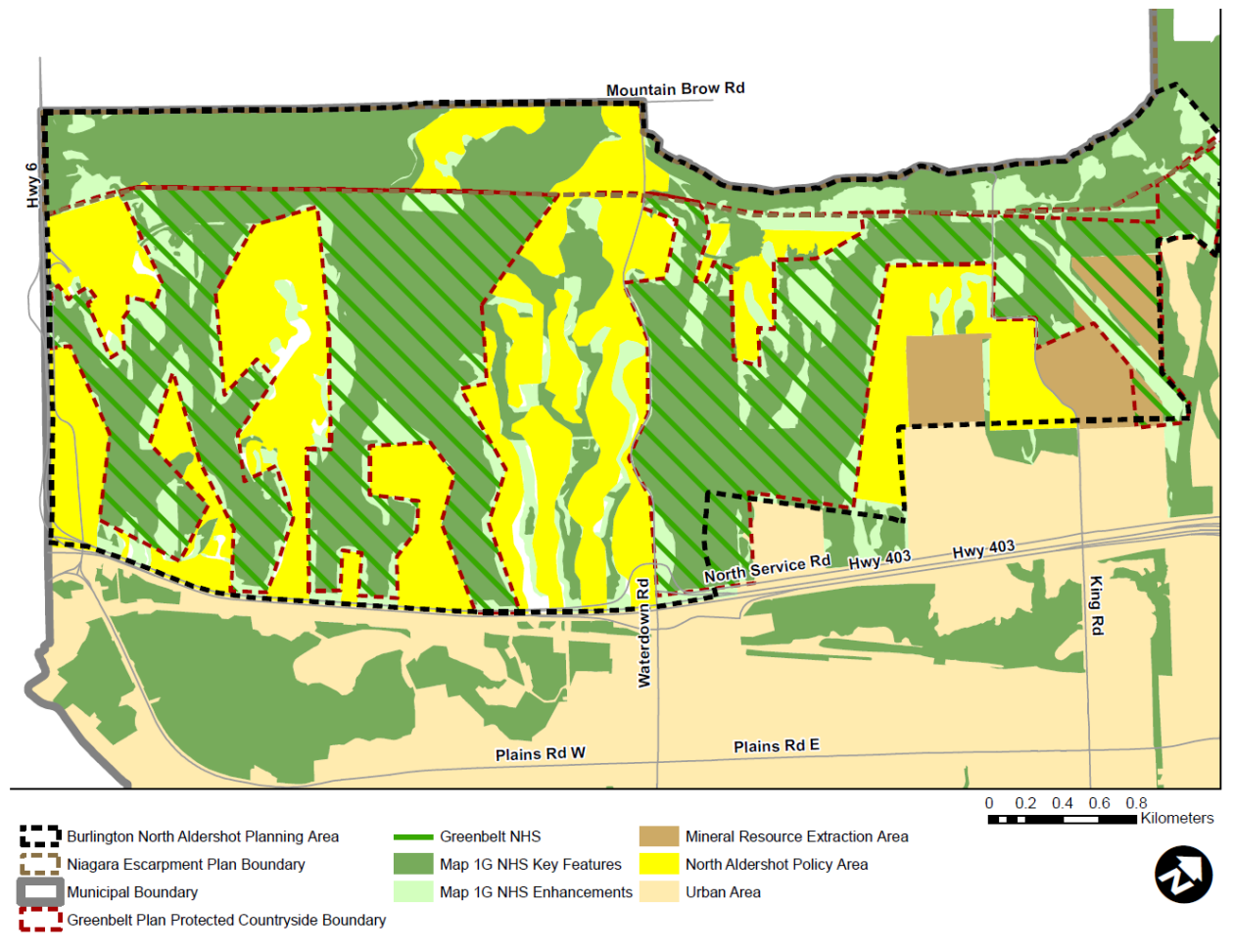
In addition, for the portion of the Greenbelt Plan area in North Aldershot below the Niagara Escarpment Brow, the lands identified by the Province as being within the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System are also designated Regional Natural Heritage System by the ROP. The RNHS lands in the Greenbelt Plan area are also subject to the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System (overlay). The ROP implements the Greenbelt Plan by recognizing the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System as one of two key systems to the Region’s Natural Heritage System (the other being the Regional Natural Heritage System).

As mentioned previously, the extent of the RNHS includes the lands that were recommended for protection in the NAIR, 1994 report. However, the RNHS includes lands within the GBNHS that are not included within the Environmental Protection Area designation on Schedule D of the City of Burlington Official Plan. Examples include the lands that are designated Infill Residential on the north and east sides of King Road to the north of Bayview Park and lands also designated Infill Residential on Old Waterdown

Road. The boundary of the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 along the west boundary of the Central Sector also appears to extend onto lands designated Detached Residential as well.

Map 1G of the ROP, and reproduced below as Figure 12 in North Aldershot, identifies the lands shown as key features, linkages, enhancement areas and buffers (which along with the key features make up the RNHS) in North Aldershot:

Map 12: 2009 Natural Heritage System Key Features, and Enhancement Areas in North Aldershot



4.2.2 Regional Natural Heritage System Refinements

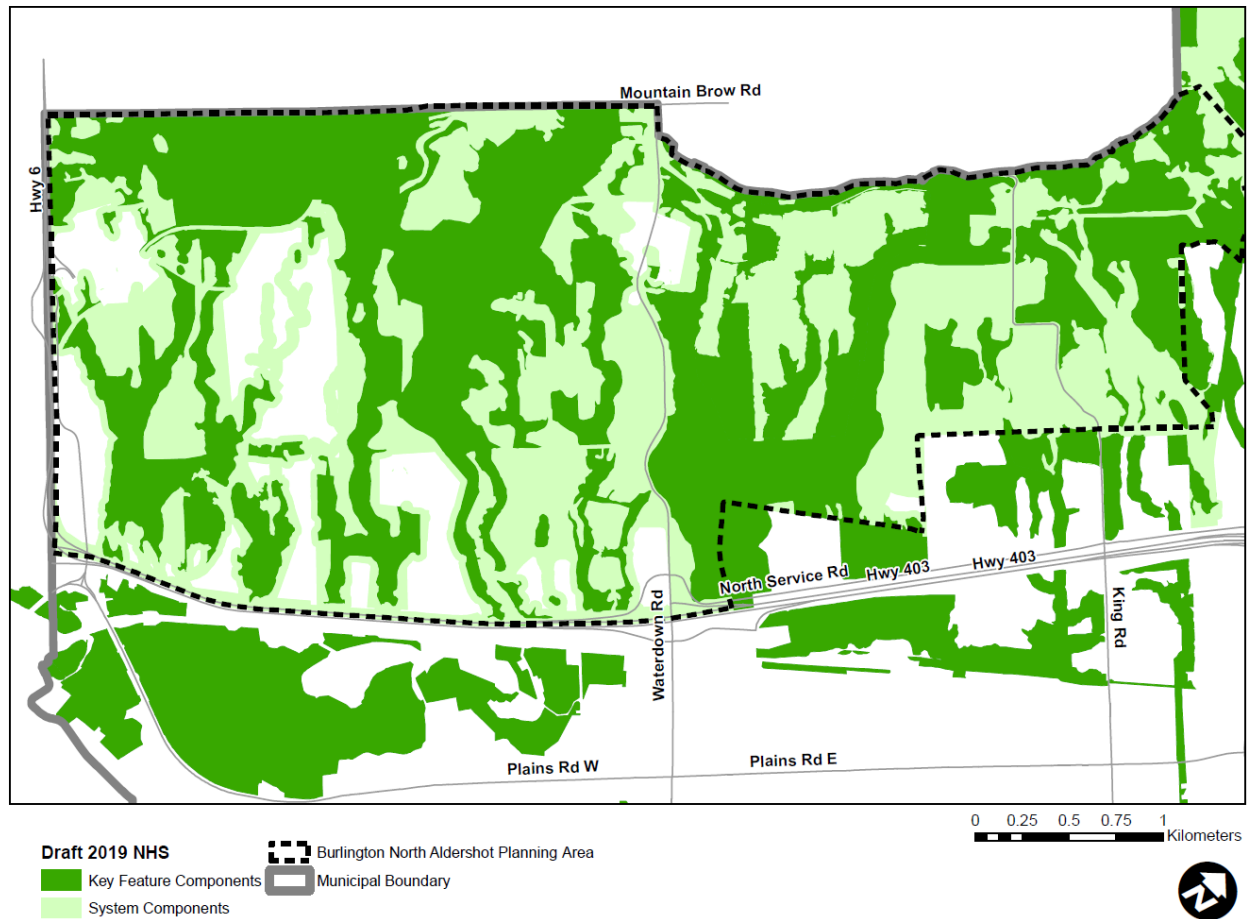
With the above mapping as a base, a review of the RNHS mapping in Halton was undertaken as part of the MCR. The review of the RNHS mapping followed a process that has been outlined in detail in Section 4.3 of the Natural Heritage Discussion paper. The

review of the RNHS mapping within the North Aldershot area was carried out to determine if:

- There were additional key features as defined in Section 115.3 and 115.4 of the ROP in North Aldershot that should be mapped on Map 1G of the ROP;
- The boundaries of the key features in North Aldershot shown on Map 1G of the ROP should be refined; and,
- There were additional linkages and enhancement areas that should be included within the RNHS on Map 1 of the ROP.

On the basis of the work completed, draft 2019 Natural Heritage System mapping was prepared. Figure 13 below shows the updated and refined limits of the key features and system components (including linkages, enhancement areas and buffers) in North Aldershot based on the additional analysis completed (it is noted that the map below includes the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan as a system component and this is discussed in Section 4.3).

Figure 13: Draft 2019 RNHS mapping Key features and System components



4.3 Growth Plan and Regional Natural Heritage System

Refinements

In addition to the technical process that occurred to update the RNHS, the ROP policy framework is also required to reflect policies in the Growth Plan, 2019 that apply to the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (NHSGP).

Policy direction in the Growth Plan, 2019 directs municipalities to incorporate the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan (NHSGP) as an overlay in official plans with an appropriate policy framework to maintain, restore and enhance the diversity and connectivity of the system and the long-term ecological or hydrologic functions of the features and areas.

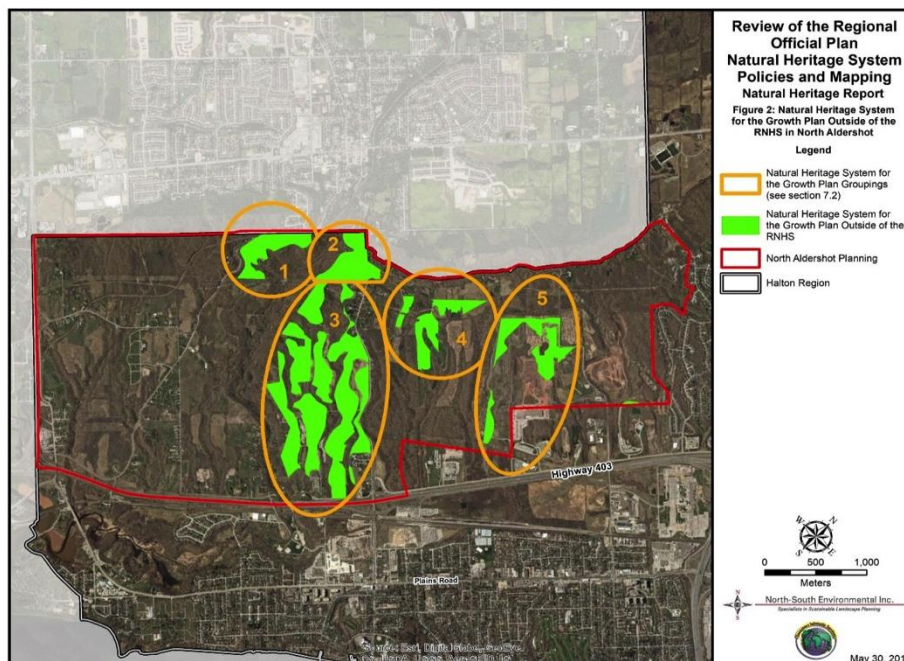
The Province released a map of the Natural Heritage System (NHS) in February 2018. The policies of the Growth Plan pertain only to the NHS identified within the Growth Plan. Section 4.2.2.4 of the Growth Plan, 2019 indicates that the Provincial mapping does not apply until the upper tier municipality has implemented it.

However, this section goes on to state:

“Until that time, the policies in this Plan that refer to the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan will apply outside settlement areas to the natural heritage systems identified in official plans that were approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017.”

In Halton Region, this means that the policies apply to lands that are designated RNHS on Map 1 of the ROP (2009) outside of the urban boundary. Within North Aldershot, the Provincial mapping of the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan extends into the Central and East Sectors, as shown on Figure 14 below.

Figure 14: Review of ROP Natural Heritage System and NHSGP for refinement



Section 4.2.3.1 of the Growth Plan, 2019 establishes a general prohibition on development and site alteration within key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features that are included within the NHS mapped by the Province with some exceptions listed in the Growth Plan, 2019. In addition, the Growth Plan requires that connectivity be maintained or where possible enhanced and that the removal of other natural features not identified as a key feature is avoided where possible. Updated in the Growth Plan,

2019 was the inclusion of significant woodlands in the definition of a key natural heritage feature where development and site alteration is not permitted with the exception of uses outlined in Section 4.2.3.1 of the Growth Plan.

The Growth Plan, 2019 Section 4.2.4.1 further impacts North Aldershot, by establishing a minimum vegetation protection zone (VPZ) adjacent to key natural heritage features that are within the NHSGP and in key hydrologic features that are both within and outside of the NHSGP and outside of settlement areas. A minimum 30 metre is a mandatory buffer for key hydrologic features, fish habitat and significant woodlands through Section 4.2.4.1 c) of the Growth Plan, 2019. All other key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features will require a VPZ to be determined through a natural heritage evaluation or hydrologic evaluation. While new buildings and structures for agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, or on-farm diversified uses are exempt from preparing an evaluation in accordance with Section 4.2.4.4, new single detached dwellings would not be exempt. Figure 15 below identifies the NHS components and the 30m VPZ for Key Features of the NHS and Greenbelt NHS in North Aldershot.

Figure 15: NHS components and 30m Vegetation Protection Zone for Key Features of the NHS in North Aldershot



Consultants retained by the Region reviewed the RNHS and NHSGP mapping to determine if the Region should request that the NHSGP be removed or refined in North Aldershot. The ecological analysis completed resulted in the following findings.

Two areas identified in the NHSGP are also identified as Escarpment Protection Areas in the NEP (Areas 1 and 2 in Figure 14). These areas will continue to be mapped as key features in the Region’s NHS but not as part of the NHSGP as the NHSGP does not apply in the NEP.

Seven of the areas identified in the NHSGP (Area 3 in Figure 14) are located generally between Grindstone Creek and Waterdown Road. Within this area are a number of key features and enhancement areas that are already within the RNHS. None of the seven areas satisfy the “Regional Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Technical Report on Criteria, Rationale and Methods” (OMNRF, 2018) (the “Technical Report”) criteria for refinement of the NHSGP and are therefore not being considered for refinement or removal at this time.

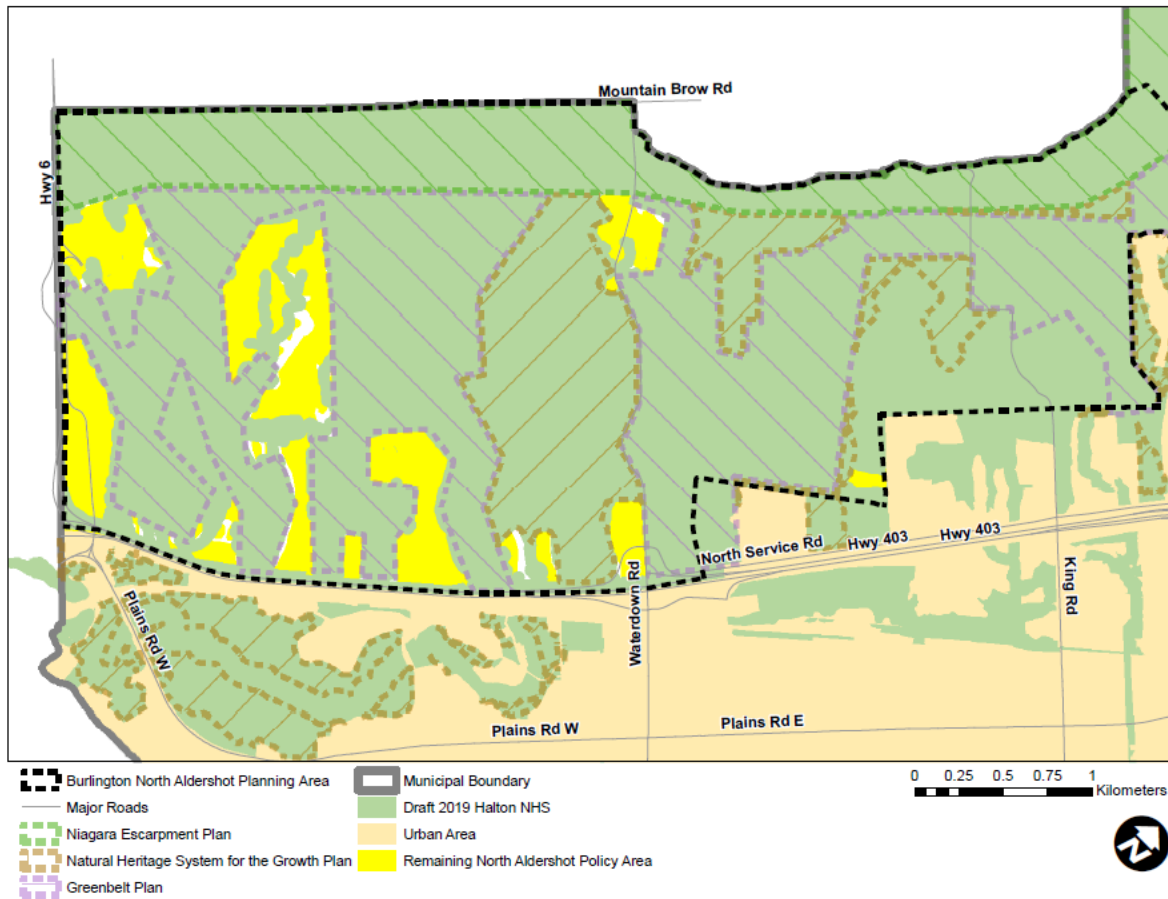
There are three areas east of Waterdown Road (Area 4 in Figure 14) included in the NHSGP. Like the areas discussed above, these are largely open lands currently used for agriculture. Within this area are a number of key features and enhancement areas that are already within the RNHS and they are located adjacent to key features in the NHSGP. None of the three areas satisfy the Provincial guidelines for refinement of the NHSGP and are therefore not being considered for refinement or removal at this time.

There are three areas in the NHSGP that are generally situated around the former Regional landfill (Area 5 in Figure 15). These are partially situated on the two closed landfill sites. In general, the rationale for the boundaries of the NHSGP cannot be determined with certainty for this area as it includes some, but not all wooded areas, and excludes some woodland that is likely Significant Woodland according to the ROP. Based on the guidance in the Technical Report (OMNRF 2018) there is no basis to remove or refine any of these areas in the NHSGP. However, there could be an opportunity to refine the key features and enhancement area boundaries in the RNHS in this area. As a consequence of the above, it is not recommended that any alterations to the boundary of the NHSGP be made in North Aldershot.

4.3.1 2019 Regional Natural Heritage System

Figure 16 below shows the draft 2019 RNHS which includes the NHSGP. On the basis of the review of the location of key features, linkages and enhancement areas and the application of the minimum vegetation protection zones adjacent to key features in the NHSGP and any refinements to the key features, the amount of land that is not within the RNHS is significantly reduced. The areas that are not within the 2019 RNHS (which includes lands in the NHSGP) are identified in yellow Figure 16.

Figure 16: Draft 2019 Halton NHS and remaining lands within the NHSGP



It is noted that the mapping of the draft 2019 RNHS, shown in Figure 16 now includes the lands that were the site of the former landfill sites. The ecological restoration of these lands has been an on-going project for the City of Burlington and Halton Region and have been recognized as an area for enhancement in the RNHS. The draft 2019 NHS also includes the lands designated Infill Residential on the west side of King Road north of Bayview Park. Additional RNHS areas are also identified on lands designated North Aldershot Special Study Area of the Burlington Official Plan in the West Sector and lands also designated and zoned for Infill Residential purposes on Old York Road. Lastly, the mapping includes a considerable amount of additional land within the RNHS on the Gates of Heaven Cemetery that is zoned for cemetery uses. The Natural Heritage Discussion paper provides a background on the RNHS review including a review of the linkages and enhancement areas.

On the basis of the work completed, it has been recommended that 405 hectares of land be added to the RNHS in North Aldershot. This would increase the amount of land in the

RNHS in North Aldershot as per the ROP 2009 from 809.9 hectares to 1,214.9 hectares in 2020.

4.4 Natural Hazards

The PPS, 2020 has revised policies under Section 3.0 Protecting Public Health and Safety that provide greater emphasis on avoidance of natural and human-made hazards. The PPS, 2020 directs development away from areas where there is an unacceptable risk to public health and safety or of property damage, and not create new or aggravate existing hazards. Natural Hazards in the PPS include hazardous lands, flooding hazards, erosion hazards, dynamic beach hazards and wildland fire. The Natural Heritage System Discussion paper contains further discussion on the PPS, 2020 Natural Hazard policies and options for consideration of the natural hazard policies in mapping. Natural Hazard policies of the PPS, 2020 will need to be considered in the review of North Aldershot. Natural Heritage Areas and Natural Hazards lands will need to be considered when identifying developable area and take into consideration the PPS, 2020 policies on Natural hazards, as well as Conservation Halton's regulations and regulatory policies applicable to any future development considerations.

5.0 Integrated Growth Management Strategy Considerations

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS) component of the Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) is to develop a plan for accommodating 1,000,000 people and 470,000 jobs in Halton Region by 2041. In June 2019, Regional Council was presented with a set of Growth Scenarios that outlined a broad range of options for accommodating this growth. Building on this work, the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper provides additional information about how and where growth can be accommodated in Halton.

If a proposal was made to extend municipal services to support residential development lands for hundreds of lots on urban services in the Central Sector today, such extension would not be permitted in accordance with the Growth Plan, 2019 since such development is directed to urban settlement areas. However, consideration could be given to adding lands within North Aldershot to the urban area in such a circumstance through a settlement area expansion in accordance with the Growth Plan, 2019.

With the above in mind, the sections below outline the Provincial policies that would need to be considered in making a determination of whether a settlement area expansion into North Aldershot would conform to the PPS, 2020 and the Growth Plan, 2019.

5.2 Growth Management Discussion

The PPS, 2020 generally supports the efficient use of land and infrastructure in settlement areas. In this regard, Section 1.1.3.2 states the following:

“Land use patterns within settlement areas shall be based on densities and a mix of land uses which:

- a) efficiently use land and resources;
- b) are appropriate for, and efficiently use, the infrastructure and public service facilities which are planned or available, and avoid the need for their unjustified and/or uneconomical expansion;

- c) minimize negative impacts to air quality and climate change, and promote energy efficiency;
- d) prepare for the impacts of a changing climate;
- e) support active transportation;
- f) are transit-supportive, where transit is planned, exists or may be developed; and
- g) are freight-supportive.

Land use patterns within settlement areas shall also be based on a range of uses and opportunities for intensification and redevelopment in accordance with the criteria in policy 1.1.3.3, where this can be accommodated.”

The above section also requires that settlement areas be planned such that land is used efficiently. The PPS, 2020 provides further direction that a settlement area boundary expansion can only occur when it has been demonstrated that the infrastructure which are planned or available are suitable for development over the long term, are financially viable over their life cycle and protect public health and safety and the natural environment (Policy 1.1.3.8b)).

Section 1.1.3.6 of the PPS, 2020 indicates that whenever the outward expansion of urban areas is contemplated, the new development should occur adjacent to the existing built-up area and should have a compact form, mix of use and densities that allow for efficient use of land and infrastructure. Given the nature of the known environmental constraints within North Aldershot, new development would generally be more scattered (since it would be confined to pockets of lands not subject to constraints) instead of the more compact residential development that typically occurs adjacent to existing urban areas.

The Growth Plan, 2019 provides policy direction to ensure the efficient use of land and infrastructure through directing growth to settlement areas and prioritizing intensification with a focus on strategic growth areas, urban growth centres and Major Transit Station Areas. Any expansion to the settlement area boundary may only occur through a Municipal Comprehensive Review based on a Land Needs Assessment (LNA). Through the IGMS, the LNA may determine that there are insufficient opportunities to accommodate the forecasted growth through intensification in the built up area and in the existing designated greenfield area. As part of the IGMS, the Growth Scenarios report presented to Regional Council in June 2019 introduced eight scenarios, four of which were based on local plans and priorities and an initial assessment of settlement area

expansion. All of the scenarios except one contemplate settlement area expansion, but do not specifically include the North Aldershot area. Section 2.2.8.3 of the Growth Plan, 2019 establishes a series of policy tests that must be met for consideration of a settlement area expansion. Section 2.2.8.3 of the Growth Plan, 2019 states:

Where the need for a settlement area boundary expansion has been justified in accordance with policy 2.2.8.2, the feasibility of the proposed expansion will be determined and the most appropriate location for the proposed expansion will be identified based on the comprehensive application of all the policies in this Plan, including the following:

- a) there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;
- b) The infrastructure and public service facilities needed would be financially viable over the full life cycle of these assets;
- c) The proposed expansion would be informed by applicable water and wastewater master plans or equivalent and stormwater master plans or equivalent, as appropriate;
- d) The proposed expansion, including the associated water, wastewater and stormwater servicing, would be planned and demonstrated to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential negative impacts on watershed conditions and the water resource system, including the quality and quantity of water;
- e) Key hydrologic areas and the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan should be avoided where possible;
- f) Prime agricultural areas should be avoided where possible. To support the Agricultural System, alternative locations across the upper- or single-tier municipality will be evaluated, prioritized and determined based on avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the impact on the Agricultural System and in accordance with the following:
 - Expansion into specialty crop areas is prohibited;
 - Reasonable alternatives that avoid prime agricultural areas are evaluated; and
 - When prime agricultural areas cannot be avoided, lower priority agricultural lands are used.

- g) The settlement area to be expanded is in compliance with the minimum distance separation formulae;
- h) Any adverse impacts on the agri-food network, including agricultural operations, from expanding settlement areas would be avoided, or if avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through an agricultural impact assessment;
- i) The policies of Sections 2 (Wise Use and Management of Resources) and 3 (Protecting Public Health and Safety) of the PPS are applied.

Should the policy tests for a proposed settlement area expansion based on the LNA not be met, the lands within North Aldershot will be re-designated as rural, in accordance with the policies of the PPS, 2020.

There are a number of other Provincial policy considerations in the Growth Plan, 2019 including Section 2.2.1.3 which directs upper-tier municipalities to undertake integrated planning to manage forecasted growth that will establish an urban form that will optimize infrastructure, particularly transit and transportation corridors to support the achievement of complete communities as well as support the environmental and agricultural protection objectives of the Growth Plan, 2019.

Section 2.2.1.4 states that applying the policies of the Growth Plan, 2019 will support the achievement of complete communities that achieve a diverse mix of land uses, improving social equity, providing a diverse range of housing options, expanding and providing more convenient access to transit.

In addition to ensuring that existing infrastructure is optimized before new infrastructure is constructed, the Growth Plan, 2019 directs through Section 3.2.1.2 that new or expanded infrastructure will occur through an integrated manner and include the evaluations of long-range scenario based planning, environmental and financial planning. Section 3.2.6.2 further states that municipal water and wastewater systems will be planned, designed, constructed or expanded through prioritizing opportunities for optimization and improved efficiency within the existing system. Given the environmental constraints, and limited growth potential of North Aldershot, the financial feasibility and efficiency of providing urban services to the lands currently eligible for Urban Services through the ROP will need to be assessed. The detailed servicing analysis and financial impact will be determined through the development of the Growth Concepts as part of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy.

The applicability of the above policies to North Aldershot, will need to be further analyzed and confirmed as part of the development of the growth concepts stage of the IGMS.

Discussion Question 1

Given the environmental and other provincial policy constraints, what are appropriate future land uses that should be permitted in the North Aldershot area?

6.0 Climate Change Considerations

Consideration of the results of the Climate Change Discussion Paper should be addressed in the policy review of the North Aldershot area. The ROP provides direct and indirect policies that address Climate Change including promoting compact development, supporting energy and water conservation, improving air quality, facilitating energy conservation and reducing GHG emission levels. Opportunities to enhance ROP climate change policies are being considered through the Climate Change Discussion Paper. The review of North Aldershot and the update to its policy framework would need to consider a climate change lens in the areas of Integrated Growth Management and Natural Heritage System and agricultural and rural land protection. The climate change lens would direct growth towards compact and mixed-use communities with transit-supportive densities, and away from natural heritage and agricultural lands.

Protecting the Regional Natural Heritage System from fragmentation due to its development encroachment is instrumental in maintaining its vitality. A strong and continuous Regional Natural Heritage System provides valuable ecosystem services like clean air and water and carbon sequestration. It also supports the Region's resilience and capacity to respond to extreme weather events. Similarly, protecting the Agricultural and Rural system is also important in mitigating climate change impacts through the carbon sequestration ability of its soils. In addition, a healthy agricultural system supports a viable practice that in turn contributes to local food resilience within the Region.

7.0 Summary and Next Steps

The overall goal of the North Aldershot review is to update the land use permissions to reflect the current Provincial Plans. This discussion paper reviews the Provincial policy framework impacting North Aldershot, the key findings of the technical background work related to the Natural Heritage System mapping review and identifies the factors to consider when reviewing the existing policy framework from a growth management and complete community perspective.

This report will form the basis for consultation with municipalities, conservation authorities and the public. Following the consultation component, a policy directions report will be brought forward to Council to guide Phase 3 of the ROPR and identify policy directions as they relate to North Aldershot.

Discussion Question 2

Are there any additional considerations or trends that Halton Region should review in terms of the North Aldershot Planning Area review of the ROP?

Acronym Glossary

GBNHS	Greenbelt Natural Heritage System
GP	Growth Plan
IGMS	Integrated Growth Management Strategy
LNA	Land Needs Assessment
MCR	Municipal Comprehensive Review
NEP	Niagara Escarpment Plan
NHS	Natural Heritage System
NHSGP	Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan
PPS	Provincial Policy Statement
PWBWP	Parkway Belt West Plan
RNHS	Regional Natural Heritage System
ROP	Regional Official Plan
ROPR	Regional Official Plan Review
VPZ	Vegetation Protection Zone

Glossary of Terms

Complete Communities

Places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and settlement areas that offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, and services, a full range of housing, transportation options and public service facilities. Complete communities are age-friendly and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts. (Growth Plan, 2019)

Infrastructure

Means physical structures (facilities and corridors) that form the foundation for development. Infrastructure includes: sewage and water systems, septage treatment systems, stormwater management systems, waste management systems, electricity generation facilities, electricity transmission and distribution systems,

communications/telecommunications, transit and transportation corridors and facilities, oil and gas pipelines and associated facilities. (PPS, 2020)

Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS)

A strategy prepared by Halton Region during its current Municipal Comprehensive Review to establish a vision and implementation plan to guide growth and development in Halton and its local municipalities to 2041.

Land Needs Assessment

A standard methodology providing direction on how to determine the quantity of land needed to accommodate forecasted population and employment growth to the Growth Plan horizon in a manner that supports Growth Plan policy objectives. Upper- and single-tier municipalities are required to use this methodology.

Municipal Comprehensive Review

A new official plan, or an official plan amendment, initiated by an upper- or single-tier municipality under section 26 of the Planning Act that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of the Growth Plan.

Natural Heritage System

Means system made up of natural heritage features and areas, and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems. These systems can include natural heritage features and areas, federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other natural heritage features, lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, areas that support hydrologic functions, and working landscapes that enable ecological functions to continue. The Province has a recommended approach for identifying natural heritage systems, but municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective may also be used.

New Multiple Lots or Units for Residential Development

Means the creation of more than three units or lots through either plan of subdivision, consent, or plan of condominium. (Growth Plan, 2019, Greenbelt Plan, 2017)

Prime Agricultural Area

Means areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. This includes areas of prime agricultural lands and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4 through 7 lands, and additional areas where there is a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture. Prime agricultural areas may be identified by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food using guidelines developed by the Province as amended from time to time. A prime agricultural area may also be identified through an alternative agricultural land evaluation system approved by the Province.

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

The Provincial Policy Statement provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. As a key part of Ontario's policy-led planning system, the Provincial Policy Statement sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The Provincial Policy Statement is issued under the authority of section 3 of the Planning Act.

Rural Areas

Means a system of lands within municipalities that may include rural settlement areas, rural lands, prime agricultural areas, natural heritage features and areas, and resource areas. (PPS, 2020)

Rural Lands

Means lands which are located outside settlement areas and which are outside prime agricultural areas. (PPS, 2020)

Settlement Areas

Means urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are: a) built-up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and b) lands which have been designated in an official plan for development over the long-term planning horizon provided for in policy 1.1.2. In cases where land in designated growth areas is not available, the settlement may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated. (PPS, 2020)

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