

Report To:	Regional Chair and Members of Regional Council
From:	Bob Gray, Commissioner, Legislative and Planning Services and Corporate Counsel
Date:	June 16, 2021
Report No:	LPS49-21
Re:	Statutory Public Meeting - Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 48 - An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Report No. LPS49-21 re: “Statutory Public Meeting - Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 48 - An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure” be received for information.
2. THAT the Regional Clerk forward a copy of Report No. LPS49-21 to the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Milton, the Town of Oakville, Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation Authority, and Grand River Conservation for their information.

REPORT

Executive Summary

- The purpose of this report is to provide information to support a Statutory Public Meeting to be held on June 16, 2021 prior to the regular meeting of Regional Council regarding Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) No. 48 - “An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure.”
- In February 2021 through Report No. LPS17-21, Regional Council authorized staff to release the draft ROPA 48 and to initiate the statutory public process required by the *Planning Act*.
- Draft ROPA 48 proposes to advance elements of the Regional Urban Structure that establish a hierarchy of strategic growth areas in the Regional Official Plan to achieve partial conformity to the Growth Plan 2019 as amended. Draft ROPA 48 is provided as Attachment #1 (document under separate cover) to this report.

- Draft ROPA 48 also advances policies and mapping for Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas, Regional Nodes, and strategic employment conversions.
- At the time of writing, the Region has received 14 submissions from the public agencies including the four local municipalities and over 56 submissions from members of the public, including submissions received as part of the consultation on the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper and Supplemental Discussion Paper released in July 2020 through Report No. LPS56-20 and LPS89-20. Regional staff are working with the local municipalities and are contemplating changes to ROPA 48 policies to be brought forward with the future recommendation report.
- Following the Statutory Public Meeting, Regional staff will review all comments received in response to Draft ROPA 48 and prepare a final recommendation report which is anticipated to be brought forward for Regional Council's consideration in July, provided there are no unresolved issues.

Background

In the Fall of 2020 as part of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy, Regional staff consulted with the public on matters related to Regional urban structure through two Discussion Papers:

- Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper, released in July 2020 through Report No. LPS56-20; and
- Supplemental Discussion Paper on Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre and Major Transit Station Area, released in October 2020 through Report No. LPS89-20.

These discussion papers explored in detail the potential elements of a Regional Urban Structure for accommodating growth and intensification by identifying and defining strategic growth areas including Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas and other nodes and corridors.

Through Report No. LPS84-20, Regional Council directed staff to prepare an initial scoped Regional Official Plan Amendment, under Section 26 of the *Planning Act* that would advance key elements of a Regional Urban Structure for accommodating growth and intensification in strategic growth areas required by the Growth Plan. The elements of a Regional Urban Structure are supported by key local planning priorities that define growth, intensification and urban structure that in some cases have not yet been recognized in the Regional Official Plan

On February 17th, 2021, Regional Council authorized staff, through Report No. LPS17-21, to initiate the statutory planning process and release draft ROPA 48 for public and

agency consultation in accordance with the *Planning Act*. The elements of the Regional Urban Structure advanced in ROPA 48 would achieve conformity with the Growth Plan.

At the Regional Council meeting, Council provided the following additional recommendations:

- THAT Regional staff be directed to include the southern portion of the Agerton Secondary Plan (lands south of hydro corridor) to facilitate the Major Transit Station Area and the southerly Milton Education Village employment land conversions as part of the draft “Regional Official Plan Amendment 48 - An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure”, attached to Report No. LPS17-21 and work with Town of Milton staff to frame the supporting rationale and basis for the inclusion of these lands.
- THAT given the changing nature of employment and the need to understand the role of employment in the mixed use growth nodes, request that Regional staff consider a policy which would allow for changes in the ratio between population and jobs within each of the growth nodes outside of a municipal comprehensive review. A policy should allow for changes to capture the evolving nature of employment uses which are flexible and responsive to the market and which capture the contribution mix of employment and residential uses which contribute to the vibrancy and success of the growth nodes.
- THAT Regional staff consider the local input in the defining the growth node policies.
- THAT Regional staff comment on the ability of the growth nodes to contribution to higher density employment and how this is factored into the land needs for employment forecasts.

Draft ROPA 48 has been modified following Council’s direction to include the employment conversion of the Agerton Secondary Plan and the southerly Milton Education Village prior to circulating to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to satisfy the legislative requirement under Section 17(17.1) of the *Planning Act*. Regional staff continue to work with the Town of Milton to document the supporting rationale and basis for the inclusion of these lands. Further, staff have been working with the local municipalities and are contemplating changes to draft ROPA 48 policies to address comments received. For example, consideration of Council directions related to the evolving nature of employment and higher density employment opportunities will be considered and examined with the public feedback and addressed as part of the future recommendation report for ROPA 48.

Prior to advancing a Regional Official Plan Amendment as part of the municipal comprehensive review process under Section 26 of the Planning Act, a Special Meeting of Council must be held that is open to the public. The Section 26 Special Meeting of Council was held on November 18, 2020.

Discussion

The purpose of this report is to provide information to support a Statutory Public Meeting to be held on June 16, 2021 prior to the regular meeting of Regional Council regarding Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) No. 48 - "An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure." No decisions on ROPA 48 will be made at the meeting.

Draft ROPA 48 is an important component of the Regional Official Plan Review that advances elements of the Regional Urban Structure that the Region is required to address to achieve conformity to the Provincial Growth Plan. These elements include implementing Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas and other strategic growth areas that are identified and supported by local plans and priorities, as well as the identification of employment areas and consideration of employment conversions.

Draft ROPA 48

Draft ROPA 48 is provided as Attachment #1 to this report (document under separate cover). Draft ROPA 48 consists of policy and mapping amendments as follows:

- **Population and Employment Distribution and Targets**
 - updates population and employment allocations assigned to Halton Region to 2051 by the Growth Plan, 2019 as amended;
 - minimum density targets for strategic growth areas such as MTSAs; and,
 - identifies proportional mix of residents and jobs within MTSAs and Primary Regional Nodes.

- **Urban Growth Centres (UGCs)**
 - refines and/or adjusts the boundaries of the Urban Growth Centres including Burlington, Milton, and Midtown Oakville; and,
 - incorporates minor changes to Urban Growth Centre policy framework in conformity with the Growth Plan, 2019 as amended.

- **Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)**
 - delineates the boundaries of five MTSAs (Bronte GO, Appleby GO, Aldershot GO, Georgetown GO and Acton GO);
 - incorporates policy changes to MTSA framework in conformity with the Growth Plan, 2019 as amended;
 - identifies policy framework for Protected MTSAs under Section 16(15) of the *Planning Act*; and,
 - revises policy framework to recognize proposed Major Transit Station Areas; and remove the designation of the Downtown Burlington John Street bus station as an MTSA.

- **Regional Nodes**
 - identifies Regionally Significant Strategic Growth Areas and a corresponding policy frame work for Primary and Secondary Regional Nodes.

- **Employment Area Conversions**
 - advances an initial set of strategic employment conversions related to growth and intensification that meet the criteria identified by the Region in conformity with the Growth Plan and support the implementation of local municipal plans and priorities.

- **Employment Planning policies**
 - Identifies a policy framework that ensures an appropriate mix of residential and employment uses in strategic growth areas; and,
 - Incorporates policy changes that recognize the importance of existing employment uses and land use compatibility considerations as redevelopment within these areas is considered.

- **Mapping Updates**
 - Identifies new Map 1H that establishes the Regional Urban Structure,
 - Introduces new Map 6 delineating the boundaries of the MTSAs; and,
 - Updates Map 1, 1C and 3 to reflect the Regional Urban Structure.

Community Engagement

To ensure comprehensive community engagement on the draft amendment, the *Planning Act* requires a number of engagement opportunities. In this regard, public consultation on Draft ROPA 48 includes but is not limited to the following:

- **Public Information Centre**
A virtual Public Information Centre (PIC) will be held virtually on June 9, 2021 at 7:00pm. Notice of Public Information Centre was provided by way of newspaper notification, posting on halton.ca/ropr, through social media channels, Mailchimp and email notification lists. The PIC allows members of the public the opportunity to review and provide feedback on Draft ROPA 48.

- **Statutory Public Meeting**
A Statutory Public Meeting will be held on June 16, 2021 prior to the regular meeting of Regional Council. Notice of the Statutory Public Meeting was provided to the public by way of advertisement in the newspaper on May 27, 2021, posting on halton.ca/ropr, through social media channels, and distribution mailchimp and email notification lists.

- **Regional Webpage**
Information on Draft ROPA 48 has been made available at www.halton.ca/ROPR

The version of Draft ROPA 48 provided as Attachment #1 to this report has not changed since Regional Council authorized its release for public consultation through Report No. LPS17-21. At the time of writing this report, Halton Region has received 70 comments from the public and public agencies regarding Draft ROPA 48. The comments received to date as part of the consultation on the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper and Supplemental Discussion Paper released in July 2020 through Report No. LPS56-20 and LPS89-20 and draft ROPA 48 include the following:

- requests for clarity on the ability of the Region and local municipalities to implement the proportion of residents and jobs in strategic growth areas;
- comments seeking additional rationale on the adjusted boundary to the Burlington Urban Growth Centre;
- requests for further changes to the MTSA boundaries;
- additional employment conversion requests; and,
- comments for clarity on the policy framework relating to land use compatibility of sensitive uses near employment lands.

All comments received through the consultation on the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper, the Supplemental Discussion Paper and draft ROPA 48 will be included together with staff commentary as part of the future recommendation report to Regional Council.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Section 17(17.1) of the *Planning Act* requires the Region to circulate a draft amendment for the Minister's review at least 90 days in advance of providing notification of an open house and statutory public meeting. To satisfy this legislative requirement of the *Planning Act*, a draft of ROPA 48 was circulated to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on February 23, 2021 as the Minister is the approval authority for the ROPA. The intent of this requirement is to ensure the Ministry has ample opportunity to review the draft amendment and identify any Growth Plan conformity related concerns. At the time of writing, comments have not been received by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Public Agency Comments

As required by the *Planning Act*, the Region must circulate the draft amendment to the list of prescribed agencies in the act. At the time of writing, Regional staff have received 14 submissions from the public agencies and these are provided as Attachment #2 (document under separate cover) to this report. Regional staff will ensure these comments are addressed through a comprehensive response document as part of the ROPA 48 recommendation report.

As ROPA 48 is advancing key elements of the Regional Urban Structure supported by key local planning priorities, the input received from the local municipalities have played an important role in shaping the draft ROPA by providing input and implementation recommendations to ensure the policy framework would appropriately support the local

plans vision and priorities. Regional staff have received formal comments from the local municipalities and the range of comments received from each local municipality is summarized below.

City of Burlington

The City of Burlington comments include:

- Support for the approach to advance ROPA 48 as a phased amendment to the Regional Official Plan Review;
- Support for changes to the Regional Official Plan to identify a hierarchy of strategic growth areas as it reinforces the City's Urban Structure, but Burlington staff suggest refinements to the Regional Node policy framework; and,
- Burlington staff request flexibility for implementation of the target proportion of residents and jobs in the strategic growth areas policy framework.

Town of Halton Hills

The Town of Halton Hills staff request further clarification on:

- How the recommended targets and resident/job ratios for the Acton and Georgetown MTSAs have been determined;
- Which local nodes within the Town are being considered in the Regional Strategic Growth Areas and expectations for these nodes to accommodate regional growth;
- Whether the local nodes and corridors identified through ROPA 48 will not require the completion of an Area Specific Plan and recommend that the amendment be modified to provide flexibility for the local municipalities to develop detailed official plan policies for strategic growth areas in lieu of area specific plans; and,
- Clarification on the employment area conversions and the associated policy framework that requires the local municipalities to ensure that redevelopment of employment lands outside the employment areas retain space for a significant number of jobs.

Town of Milton

The Town of Milton comments include:

- Support of the Council motion to advance both the southern portion of the Milton Education Village and the Agerton area as an employment conversion to enable new types of employment planning for these areas to align with Milton Council's vision for a mixed use community, as well as Regional staff's recommended conversion of the Meritor and Bronte/Main Street Corridor site;
- Support of the hierarchy of strategic growth areas and the minimum density target for Urban Growth centres and MTSAs, but suggest that the Region's Official Plan does not define density and job targets for Regional nodes, nor should a target proportion of residents and jobs in strategic growth areas be proposed in the Regional Official Plan;
- Town staff suggest employment policy modifications for clarity and consistency with provincial plans and request that the proportion of residents and jobs per

hectare identified for the Milton MTSA be updated to reflect the Town-led Milton Mobility Hub Study Demonstration Plan;

- Support the identification of Trafalgar Road as a 'Regional Corridor' subject to the population and employment targets being defined at the local level; and,
- Town staff do not support the delineation of the Major Transit Station Area at Agerton, which should be informed through the comprehensive area specific plan process, however supports the delineation of Milton's Major Transit Station Area and request that the lands at 45 Bruce Street, the former site of a Milton Library, be included in the Urban Growth Centre/Major Transit Station Area.

Town of Oakville

The Town of Oakville comments include:

- Support of the Region's approach to establishing a hierarchy of strategic growth areas and the boundaries identified for the Midtown Urban Growth Centre and the Bronte GO MTSA;
- Support of updates to incorporate the revised growth forecasts to 2051, and assignment of a minimum density target for certain strategic growth areas that are required by the Growth Plan, 2019 as amended;
- Objection to the Region's Employment Area overlay in the Bronte GO MTSA and the Neyagawa Urban Core and request that both these areas be converted from the Region's Employment Area;
- Town staff suggested that the employment planning policy framework in draft ROPA 48 is overly prescriptive and does not enable a level of flexibility for mixed uses in strategic growth areas; and,
- Town staff are of the opinion that the target proportions of residents and jobs for strategic growth areas should be removed from draft ROPA 48.

Regional staff recognize that the final ROPA 48 amendment recommended for adoption may include updates to the policy framework to address comments received from the local municipalities and public. Regional staff will continue to work with local staff to ensure draft ROPA 48 reflects local plans and priorities and will ensure all comments received on draft ROPA 48 will be responded through a formal response document accompanying the recommendation report.

Next Steps

Following the June 16th Statutory public meeting, staff will report back to Regional Council in July with recommendations for adoption of ROPA 48 provided there are no unresolved issues. The Region is requesting that public comments on draft ROPA 48 be submitted by Wednesday, June 23, 2021 so that they can be incorporated into the formal public commentary that will accompany staff's recommendation report to adopt a final ROPA to be submitted for the Province's approval.

FINANCIAL/PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

The current approved budget for T8021D (Regional Official Plan Update) includes sufficient funding to facilitate the ROPR.

Respectfully submitted,



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Director, Planning Services and Chief
Planning Official



Bob Gray
Commissioner, Legislative and Planning
Services and Corporate Counsel

Approved by



Jane MacCaskill
Chief Administrative Officer

If you have any questions on the content of this report,
please contact:

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Attachment #1 – Draft ROPA 48 (Document Under Separate Cover)
Attachment #2 – Public Agency Comments (Document Under Separate Cover)

