

Report To:	Regional Chair and Members of Regional Council
From:	Bob Gray, Commissioner, Legislative and Planning Services and Corporate Counsel
Date:	February 17, 2021
Report No:	LPS17-21
Re:	Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment 48 - An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure

## RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Regional staff be authorized to release the draft “Regional Official Plan Amendment 48 - An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure”, attached to Report No. LPS17-21 and to initiate the statutory public process required by the *Planning Act*.
2. THAT Report No. LPS17-21 together with Attachment #1 (Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment 48) be circulated to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the purposes of fulfilling the requirements of Section 17(17.1) of the *Planning Act*.
3. THAT the Regional Clerk forward a copy of Report No. LPS17-21 to the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Milton, the Town of Oakville, Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation, Grand River Conservation, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, for their information.

## REPORT

### **Executive Summary**

- The Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) is underway and is currently in Phase 2, which includes research, technical analysis and engaging the community through the key theme area Discussion Papers.
- A Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper released in July 2020 explored the concept of focusing growth and intensification in strategic growth areas in the Region as part of the broader Integrated Growth Management Strategy in line with the requirements of the Province’s Growth Plan, 2019.

- A Supplemental Discussion Paper on the Burlington Urban Growth Centre and Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) released in October 2020 explored a potential adjustment to the Urban Growth Centre boundary for Burlington and proposed the removal of the Downtown Burlington MTSA designation from the Regional Official Plan.
- The consultation windows for both Discussion Papers have now concluded.
- Through Report No. LPS84-20, Regional Council directed staff to prepare an initial scoped Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA), under Section 26 of the *Planning Act* that would advance certain strategic local municipal planning priorities related to urban structure that are required to achieve conformity with the Growth Plan, 2019.
- Regional staff have prepared draft ROPA 48 (see Attachment #1) which identifies non-discretionary components of a Regional Urban Structure that support local plans and priorities while ensuring that Regional Council retains its ability to comprehensively and objectively evaluate the full range of Growth Concepts associated with the Integrated Growth Management Strategy as presented in Report No. LPS18-21.
- This report requests Council authorization to initiate the statutory public planning process and release draft ROPA 48 - “An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure” for public and agency consultation in accordance with the *Planning Act* and as outlined in this Report.

## Background

The Regional Official Plan Review is being advanced in partnership with Halton’s local municipalities and in consideration of local plans and priorities. The Region continues to be responsive to the local vision for growth established by the local municipalities throughout the process.

In July, 2020, through Report No. LPS56-20, Regional Council authorized the release of the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper for public consultation. The Discussion Paper explored elements of a Regional Urban Structure for accommodating growth and intensification in Halton, aligned to local plans and priorities.

In September 2020, through Report No. LPS84-20, Regional Council directed staff to develop, jointly with the City of Burlington, a Supplemental Discussion paper that highlights proposed adjustments to the Burlington Urban Growth Centre and the proposed removal of the Downtown Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) designation. The Supplemental Discussion Paper was prepared in collaboration with the City of Burlington and supported by the work completed by the City.

The Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper described specific requirements of the Growth Plan, 2019 that Halton Region must address through the Regional Official Plan Review. Those elements included implementing Urban Growth Centres, MTSAs, Corridors and other potential strategic growth areas that were identified through local urban structures, and the identification of employment areas and consideration of employment conversions. The Regional Urban Structure paper recognized the inherent hierarchy of strategic growth areas to accommodate intensification and transit supportive growth. The Supplemental Discussion Paper, presented in Report No. LPS89-20, proposed an adjusted Urban Growth Centre boundary that would direct intensification growth to a Major Transit Station along a Provincial Priority Transit Corridor and further leverage efficient use of existing public infrastructure investments in higher order transit.

In response to advancing local plans and priorities as part of the ROPR, Report No. LPS84-20 also directed staff to prepare an initial Scoped ROPA, under Section 26 of the *Planning Act* which would advance select local municipal planning priorities related to urban structure as presented in the Regional Urban Structure and Supplemental Discussion Paper. Report No. LPS84-20 outlined a number of local municipal planning priorities that were to be considered as part of the initial Scoped Regional Official Plan Amendment including boundary and policy changes to Urban Growth Centres, delineation and assignment of density targets for MTSAs, identification of additional growth nodes and strategic growth corridors with a corresponding policy framework and limited employment conversions.

By way of a letter dated November 12, 2019 the Province confirmed that municipalities may advance a phased approach to municipal comprehensive reviews through multiple official plan amendments. The contents of the initial Scoped ROPA as outlined in this Report do not compromise the ability of Council to comprehensively and objectively evaluate the full range of Growth Concepts associated with the Integrated Growth Management Strategy and the full Regional Official Plan Review exercise.

Given that the draft Regional Official Plan Amendment presented in this Report is advancing as part of a municipal comprehensive review as provided for in Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is the approval authority for this amendment.

## **Discussion**

In consultation with Halton's local municipalities, several matters of strategic importance have been identified and advanced as part of draft ROPA 48. Draft ROPA 48 is being considered as an amendment to the Region's current Official Plan to implement components of the Regional Urban Structure that establishes a hierarchy of strategic growth areas in the Regional Official Plan, which are elements that the Region is required to identify to achieve conformity to the Growth Plan, 2019. The draft ROPA 48 is provided as Attachment #1 to the Report and is comprised of the following components:

- *Population and Employment Distribution and Targets:*
  - A revision to Table 1 to update population and employment allocations assigned to Halton Region to 2051 by the Growth Plan, 2019. Further revisions to Table 1 that assign 2051 population and employment allocations to Halton's local municipalities are not included as these will be determined at the conclusion of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy Growth;
  - A new Table 2b identifies minimum density targets for Strategic Growth Areas such as MTSAs;
  - Table 2b also identifies target proportional mix of residents and jobs within certain Strategic Growth Areas in local municipalities across Halton Region to enable truly mixed use development in important growth nodes.
  
- *Regional Urban Structure:*
  - Revisions to the Urban Area policies are proposed to define a Regional Urban Structure that identifies a hierarchy of Strategic Growth Areas, differentiates between elements of a Regional Urban Structure and Local Urban Structure, and establishes objectives and policies to require local urban structures to be municipality initiated. In addition, policy revisions are proposed that specify that Regional Urban Structure amendments can only be made through a Municipal Comprehensive Review;
  - Boundary adjustments to the Urban Growth Centre for Burlington to reflect the boundary identified in the Supplemental Discussion Paper (Report No. LPS89-20);
  - Boundary adjustments to the Urban Growth Centre boundaries in Downtown Milton and Midtown Oakville to remove the regulated flood plain;
  - MTSA boundary delineation and policy changes to achieve conformity with the Growth Plan, 2019, including a policy framework to identify these stations as Protected MTSAs to meet the legislative requirements under Section 16(15) of the *Planning Act* to enable the implementation of Inclusionary Zoning policies;
  - The Downtown Burlington MTSA designation is proposed to be removed from the current Regional Official Plan mapping and interim policies are identified for proposed MTSAs (including the proposed Trafalgar GO MTSA in Milton);
  - Identification of additional Regionally-significant Strategic Growth Areas are proposed as a symbol on Map 1H to recognize growth areas identified in

Local Municipal Plans or Council endorsed local urban structures which support a hierarchy of growth throughout the Region;

- Policy direction to direct the local municipalities to prepare Official Plan policies or Area Specific Plans which would include the delineation and minimum density targets for Regional Nodes;
  - Employment land conversions that meet the criteria identified by the Region in conformity with Growth Plan, 2019 and that have been identified by the Local Municipalities as having strategic importance in advancing elements of the local urban structure including:
    - lands in Burlington within the Aldershot GO MTSA and Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre/Burlington GO MTSA areas as well as other redevelopment sites;
    - lands within the Acton GO and Guelph Street Corridor areas in Halton Hills;
    - the Bronte/Main and Meritor lands as well as the northern portion of the Milton Education Village in Milton; and
    - lands within the Palermo Village, Hospital District and Trafalgar Corridor areas as well as a portion of the Bronte GO MTSA in Oakville;
  - Employment policies to ensure that areas converted from the Regional Employment Area to mixed use in MTSA's and Regional Nodes are proposed to ensure an appropriate mix of residential and employment uses are maintained;
  - Additional policy direction to ensure that the importance of existing employment uses within Strategic Growth Areas is recognized and that requirements related to land use compatibility are applied as redevelopment within these areas is considered.
- *Mapping:*
    - Mapping updates including a proposed new Map 1H that establishes the Regional Urban Structure, a series of new proposed Maps (Map 6a-h) that delineate the boundaries of the MTSA's within Halton Region and updates to Map 3 to remove the Downtown Burlington MTSA designation.

Components of the Regional Urban Structure not initially covered through draft ROPA 48 will be considered through the balance of the Regional Official Plan Review that is continuing, in part, through the Integrated Growth Management Strategy work identified in Report No. LPS18-21 and it is expected that a subsequent amendment will be presented later in 2021. For example, the full range of employment conversions and consideration of a settlement boundary expansion all have a direct impact on overall land

supply in the Region and will be considered comprehensively through the remaining Integrated Growth Management Strategy exercise, including the endorsement of a Preferred Growth Concept targeted in Q3 2021.

### Public Engagement

Public consultation and community engagement continues to be an important component of the Regional Official Plan Review process. The consultation period for the six theme area Discussion Papers have closed. An initial consultation summary report highlighting the comments received to date through Phase 2 of the process is presented to Council through Report No. LPS05-21 “Regional Official Plan Review - Phase 2 Initial Consultation Summary”.

ROPA 48 is being advanced under Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, which requires the amendment to be approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As a result, Section 17(17.1) of the *Planning Act* applies and requires the Region to circulate a draft ROPA for the Minister’s review at least 90 days in advance of providing notification of an Open House and statutory public meeting. This report authorizes the circulation of the draft ROPA 48 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to meet this legislative requirement. The *Planning Act* requires both an Open House/Public Information Centre and a statutory public meeting to allow the public to review and provide comments on draft ROPA 48. An Open House/Public Information Centre as well as a statutory public meeting is anticipated in late May/early June. Any comments received through the statutory process will be documented on the public record and responded to by Regional staff prior to bringing forward a recommendation report to Council.

### Next Steps

Regional Council will be notified when dates for the Open House/Public Information Centre and statutory public meeting have been confirmed. Public notification of these engagement opportunities will be provided through the Region’s website, newspaper advertisements, mailing lists, social media, stakeholder groups, and other means. As required by the *Planning Act*, the proposed ROPA is to be presented at the statutory public meeting and will be made available to the public on the Region’s website at least 20 days before the statutory public meeting.

FINANCIAL/PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

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

Respectfully submitted,



Curt Benson  
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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Attachments: Attachment #1 – Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA 48) - An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure (Under Separate Cover)

