

191 Main Street South
Waterdown ON, L0R 2H0
rvassociates.ca
P 905-257-3590
E admin@rvassociates.ca

October 30, 2020

Regional Chair Carr and Members of Regional Council
Regional Municipality of Halton
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville, Ontario
L6M 3L1

Attention: Regional Clerk

Dear Chair Carr and Members of Council

Re: Regional Official Plan Review Discussion Papers - NOCBI

I am writing to you on behalf of the North Oakville Community Builders Inc. (NOCBI). The members of NOCBI are set out on the list attached to this letter. The following is their response to the Discussion Papers issued for the Region of Halton IGMS process.

Comments were previously provided by NOCBI on June 17, 2019, December 12, 2019 and March 24, 2020, on the Progress Update Report and the Integrated Growth Management Strategy Growth Scenarios: Halton Region to 2041. For completeness of the record, we have attached copies of those comments to this letter as the issues and concerns raised in those submissions have not been responded to by the Region to date or addressed within the Discussion Papers.

Natural Heritage Discussion Paper

Attached is a copy of the September 8, 2020 submission, prepared by Davies and Howe, the solicitors for NOCBI, to the Mayor and Council of the Town of Oakville on the Regional Natural Heritage System Discussion Paper, the North Oakville East Secondary Plan and specifically the Town of Oakville Staff Report on these matters. In that letter it is noted that: the Regional Official Plan currently contains specific language regarding the North Oakville Secondary Plan Area and the Regional Natural Heritage System; there is agreement with the comments from Town staff and the concern that the Region is considering a policy change in the Natural Heritage System requirements for the North Oakville Plan area.

NOCBI is concerned that nowhere in the Natural Heritage System Discussion Paper does the Region commit to carrying forward a provision the same as or similar to Section 116.2 in the Regional Official Plan. The North Oakville East Secondary Plan, OPA 272 was intended to be implemented over many years as reflected in Minutes of Settlement between the Town and the North Oakville East landowners with a 30 year time from for implementation. It is NOCBI's request that the Region maintain Section

116.2 in the new ROP and that the scope of any amendments to the ROP for North Oakville be limited to those only absolutely necessary to implement a provincially mandated policy change.

The Natural Heritage Discussion Paper sets forth a number of questions for the Region as a whole. A response to these questions has been assembled by NOCBI's consulting team and this response is attached. In addition, the consulting team has undertaken a review of the revised RNHS mapping. There are a number of issues with the proposed mapping set out below and attached.

As part of the Region of Halton Official Plan Review (ROPR), Regional staff prepared draft revised Regional Natural Heritage System (RNHS) mapping that they intend to include in their updated Official Plan. According to the Region's Natural Heritage Discussion Paper (June 2020) and supporting technical memos, they are revising the mapping to recognize planning decisions and updated information since ROPA 38 came into effect in 2009. The draft 2019 RNHS mapping was prepared by the Region and circulated for comment along with the ROPR Discussion Papers. The Region notes that a baseline date of June 2018 was used for the preparation of their 2019 RNHS mapping however, we understand that additional changes will be made to the revised mapping prior to formal adoption of the new OP to include planning approvals up to the ROP approval date.

The draft 2019 RNHS mapping includes some changes to their current (2009) RNHS mapping on the North Oakville East lands. Stonybrook Consulting Inc., and Stantec Consulting Inc. reviewed the Region's draft 2019 RNHS mapping and compared it to NHS boundaries that have been incorporated into approved Draft Plans of Subdivision and/or from approved Environmental Implementation Report/Functional Servicing Plans (EIR/FSS). This comparison identifies several areas where the Region's 2019 RNHS should be modified to reflect approvals to date. A set of six drawings are attached that present the following:

- a) the Region's 2019 RNHS;
- b) consolidation of NOCBI Owners' draft plans of subdivision or development concepts that include NHS boundaries on approved or registered draft plans, from approved EIR/FSSs or approved feature staking with agencies. NHS boundaries (red and blue linework), are based on features staking plus buffers consistent with requirements of the Town of Oakville Official Plan Amendment 272 (OPA 272);
- c) areas recommended for removal or addition to the 2019 RNHS;
- d) areas where SWM ponds are permitted in the NHS, consistent with OPA 272 and/or OMB Minutes of Settlement; and,
- e) annotations regarding the basis for NHS approvals (approved draft plan, approved EIR/FSS or approved feature stakings with agencies).

Based on our review, changes to the RNHS mapping include minor deviations from the 2019 RNHS mapping (both additions and deletions) and several more substantive changes based on channel realignments, core boundary delineations, and removal of optional linkage preserve areas. We request that the RNHS be updated to reflect the NHS boundaries shown on the attached drawings. Digital drawing files will be provided to the Region to facilitate these changes.

Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper

As noted in our previous submissions, any preferred growth scenario must be based upon the current and in effect Places to Grow Plan and land needs methodology. The new Growth Plan extends the Planning Horizon to 2051 with updated population and employment projections. There is an updated market based land needs methodology. Continuing to base the next steps of the IGMS process on a previous Growth Plan which no longer has legal status as the basis for planning growth for the future is not appropriate.

The PPS specifically refers to the provision of a market-based range and mix of housing. Market based range and mix of housing is required to be considered as part of the IGMS process. The Urban Structure set out within the Discussion paper is premised on empty nesters moving from their homes to apartments and young families will chose to move to apartments instead of ground related housing. This does not reflect the reality of a market-based range and mix of housing. Equally, it will not result in more affordable housing in the Region as set out in the attached letter. A realistic, defensible, implementable plan for growth is needed for Halton.

Attached to this letter is the analysis of the Urban Structure Discussion Paper by urbanMetrics Inc dated September 17, 2020. This letter sets out detailed responses to a number of questions posed within the Urban Structure Report. In summary, these responses state:

- Density targets along Trafalgar Road and Dundas Street should only be established after an understanding of a) how they will impact the ability of higher order intensification areas to achieve their targeted densities b) whether there is sufficient market to support additional density along the corridors c) how additional density will work in the context of the in effect Secondary Plan and existing land use commitments, and d) consideration of the allocation of growth to unplanned growth areas such as the Palermo node and the Research Innovation Lands.
- Identification of additional multi-purpose and minor arterial roads to support a higher order Regional transit network raise the question as to whether the market exists to accommodate increased densities along these roads without detracting from higher priority intensification areas and whether these roads can physically accommodate this increased density without impacting existing and planned low density neighbourhoods.
- Regarding factors to be considered when evaluating the appropriate location for potential settlement expansions, it is noted that the criteria set out within the report omit any aspect of market consideration as required by the Places to Grow Plan and the PPS. The criteria set out by the Region are focused only on desired policy outcomes and not whether the growth strategy could be supported by market trends nor includes consideration of potential adverse impacts on the regional economy, consumer housing decisions and housing affordability. There is very little discussion within the Paper regarding the economic impact of market manipulation and the need to plan for complete communities that appropriately balance all housing types and avoid the over designation of lands for apartment development. Apartment built form may be a more affordable option for singles and couples but is a less affordable option for families which require more living

space. Other key questions are raised by the potential over designation of lands for apartment development such the viability of the Region of Halton allocation program development if the markets for apartments does not materialize.

- Regarding the minimum density in the designated greenfield area, it is noted that North Oakville already exceeds the density of 50 residents and jobs per hectare set out within the Places to Grow Plan and will likely exceed 60 residents and jobs per hectare when completed. Any considerations to exceed the Provincial requirements would be to for local reasons and not to achieve Provincial targets.
- With the new Growth Plan, the Region should reconsider the Scenarios it originally proposed in its options report as they no longer reflect the new policy context and revised population and employment forecasts. As part of the next step in the process, the Region use the new market based methodology to determine its land needs and allocating future development to its area municipalities.

Regarding how the Regional Official Plan support employment growth and economic activity, the Official Plan needs to recognize the significant changes that are occurring in the commercial sector stemming from the rapid rise in e-commerce and impacts of changing behaviours due Covid-19 resulting in fundamental changes to the commercial hierarchy and the interrelationship between employment and commercial function. The Regional Official Plan should provide flexibility with the Official Plan to allow businesses to respond in this changing environment.

NOCBI looks forward to working with the Region throughout this study process. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this submission further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,



Ruth Victor MCIP, RPP, MRTPI

Cc: Myron Pestaluky, Delta Urban
 Nancy Mather, Stonybrook Consulting
 North Oakville Community Builders Inc.
 Diane Childs, Manager of Policy Planning, Town of Oakville
 Mark Simeoni, Director of Planning Services, Town of Oakville
 Curt Benson, Director of Planning Services, Region of Halton

List of NOCBI Members

Remington Group
Trinison Management Corp.
Great Gulf Homes
Tabas Reality Capital
Mattamy Homes
Melrose Investments
Argo Development Corp.
Fieldgate Homes
Dundas Trafalgar Inc.
Sixth Line Corporation
Digram Developments Oakville Inc.
Treasure Hill Homes
Tercot Communities
TWKD Developments Inc.
Branthaven Development Corp.
DG Farms Burnhamthorpe Inc.
Distrikt Developments



Ruth Victor
& Associates

191 Main Street South
Waterdown ON, L0R 2H0
rvassociates.ca
P 905-257-3590
E admin@rvassociates.ca

June 17, 2019

Chairman Carr and Members of Regional Council
Region of Halton
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville ON
L6M 3L1

Dear Chairman Carr and Members of Regional Council,

Re: LPS41-19- Regional Official Plan Review -Progress Update on the Integrated Growth Management Strategy and Preliminary Growth Scenarios

We are writing to you on behalf of North Oakville Community Builders Inc (NOCBI). We have undertaken an initial review of the above noted staff report and supporting documents. We will be undertaking a fulsome review and providing detailed comments in the weeks ahead.

At this time Regional Council is considering the Evaluation Framework for the Preliminary Growth Scenarios. We do note that there are inconsistencies between the contents and directions within the report and the assessment criteria. For example, as set out on Page 6 of the Executive Summary, the report states that all scenarios maintain the Natural Heritage System and Greenbelt Boundaries as currently mapped. On Page 4 of Appendix C Evaluation Framework, the Objective is to "Enhance the Natural Heritage System to strengthen Key features and areas and reduce the impact of new development" with the measure that "the concept that retains the greatest overall area possible of natural heritage lands will be ranked the highest." It is not clear, if all scenarios are based on the same premise of the NHS as currently mapped, how one scenario could end up ranked higher on this measure.

The same issue occurs on the other measures set ranking the concept highest where the background report does not substantiate that measure based on the data provided or assumptions used in developing the concepts. Although this is the clearest example of this type of issue, additional work should be undertaken to ensure that there is consistency between the statements within the report and the Evaluation Framework proposed and that the scenarios can be measured under these criteria.

We look forward to working with Regional Staff as this project moves forward to the next step.

Yours truly,

Ruth Victor MRTPI, MCIP RPP

December 20, 2019

Chairman Carr and Members of Regional Council

Region of Halton

1151 Bronte Road, Oakville Ontario L6M 3L1

Dear Chairman Carr:

RE: Response to Integrated Growth Management Strategy Growth Scenarios Halton Region to 2041
Attachment #4 to LPS 41-19

I am writing to you on behalf of the North Oakville Community Builders Inc. (NOCBI). The members of NOCBI are set out on the list attached to this letter. The following is their response to the report entitled Integrated Growth Management Strategy Growth Scenarios: Halton Region to 2041.

We note that there has been no formal consultation process with the development industry on the IGMS by the Region to date although staff were directed to consult with BILD. The IGMS study process must be open and transparent with engagement of all members of the community including the development industry. A fulsome engagement throughout the process will assist in all voices being heard and a more successful outcome for the IGMS process.

Through our review we have identified a number of questions and concerns with the approach and recommendations within the report which are set out below.

Any preferred growth scenario must be based upon the current and in effect Places to Grow Plan. Using a previous Growth Plan which no longer has legal status as the basis for planning growth for the future is simply not appropriate. The development industry, for any development application, would not be permitted to rely upon out of date legislation or policy framework. The same standard should be used by the Region in developing and assessing growth options through the IGMS process.

The IGMS report envisions a significant change in built form and densities beyond that which the market currently or is anticipated to support. The report acknowledges the significant and serious challenges and realistic possibility that these changes to the market will not be achieved. Scenario 3B sets out the option with the greatest departure from current market realities. We note that this Scenario was supported by the Town of Oakville. Attached to this letter is a letter prepared by urbanMetrics setting out a number of issues with Scenario 3B and the errors in the assumptions used in that evaluation.

The new draft PPS refers to the provision of a market-based range and mix of housing. It is likely this new PPS will be in force and effect prior to the amendment implementing the IGMS comes forward.

Market based range and mix of housing should be considered as part of the next step of the study process and the scenarios revised and amended accordingly. The IGMS analysis is based on two thirds of all apartment units in the 2030's accommodating larger family households. The report notes that this will be achieved by empty nesters moving from their homes to apartments and young families will chose to move to apartments instead of ground related housing. This does not reflect a market-based range and mix of housing. Equally it will not result in more affordable housing in the Region as set out in the attached letter. A realistic, defensible, implementable plan for growth is needed for Halton.

We have undertaken a detailed review of the background information provided by the local municipalities regarding the capacity of the existing DGA to accommodate the projected growth set out within the IGMS report. The vast majority of the numbers used within the IGMS report were able to be verified through other reports completed at the local level. We were challenged to find the background documents that confirmed the Town of Oakville numbers especially the assertions regarding the capacity to accommodate growth within the Oakville existing DGA. The IGMS Report states that "the identified unit potential in North Oakville is now significantly higher than originally contemplated for North Oakville under the North Oakville Secondary Plan. The potential for many more ground related units and apartment units in the Trafalgar Corridor was identified under the recent Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 321. Based on recent work completed by the Town, more than 50,000 units may be accommodated in the Oakville DGA." We have undertaken a review of the background materials to OPA 321 and cannot find any documentation that references or supports an additional 50,000 units especially since OPA 321 only increased the minimum density from 68 upha to 72 upha within the Trafalgar Corridor.

Other numbers that are suspect for the Town of Oakville included within the report are an additional 1,468 units in Downtown Oakville and 3,021 in Palermo as well as 14,393 units along Trafalgar Core (excluding Midtown and Uptown) within the BUA boundary with 9,162 units outside of identified nodes and growth areas. It is very difficult to see how these numbers will be achieved based on the current planning context, the land available for redevelopment for these new units, as well as current community context.

We are requesting that the Region make publicly available the information and rationale provided by the Town of Oakville to support the numbers used in this report.

We noted that the report states that for all scenarios, the Natural Heritage System and Greenbelt boundaries were maintained as currently mapped. It is noted that any proposed changes to the NHS resulting from the ongoing NHS review as part this process would result in the need to re-evaluate land supply and the potential land needs for urban expansions.

Regarding the financial impact of the various scenarios, we do note that the report contains conflicting positions on this matter. Firstly, the report states that there are minimal differences in the financial impacts of the scenarios. The report then states that one of the challenges is the sequencing of development and the infrastructure requirements and investments. Financing of infrastructure is included in the criteria for evaluating the scenarios. We anticipate that each of the scenarios will have a differing order of magnitude regarding costing of the required infrastructure and would encourage the

region to assess and discuss this with the development community prior to proceeding with a preferred option. Affordability of housing is driven by all of the costs included in the housing price including development charges and municipal fees. There is a direct correlation between the cost of growth and the price of housing. If affordability of housing is an issue for the Region, the cost and financing of infrastructure is an important element of this growth analysis.

Appendix C to the Report sets out the Evaluation Framework for the scenarios. The objectives as set out are reasonable starting points for an evaluation framework. The Evaluation questions could be broadened to include additional the matters for consideration. specific scenario by the Region. For example there are only two measures proposed to assess the objective of complete communities. These are protection of the NHS and Agriculture and contiguous development patterns. Building complete communities is a much broader concept then just these two measures. The use of the terminology "ranks the highest" in the measures does not allow for relative ranking of competing priorities. They are prejudicial and are structured to predetermine the selection of one specific scenario by the Region. The proposed measures need significant reconsideration prior to the next stage of the study process.

NOCBI looks forward to working with the Region throughout this study process. Should you have any questions regarding the above information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,



Ruth Victor MCIP, RPP, MRTPI

cc. Mr. Curt Benson, Director of Planning Services

Mr. Mark Simeoni, Director of Planning Town of Oakville

Mr. Lukas Reale, Delta Urban



November 24, 2019

Lukas Reale, BURPI
Senior Project Coordinator
DELTA URBAN INC.
8800 Dufferin Street, Suite 104
Vaughan, ON
L4K 0C5

Dear Mr. Reale:

RE: Oakville Staff Discussion Paper on the Halton IGMS

As requested, on behalf of the North Oakville Community Builders Inc. I have reviewed the Town of Oakville Staff Discussion Paper on Halton's Integrated Growth Management Strategy.

The Paper concludes that Oakville must be "all-in" with respect to accepting growth and that it is staff's position that "choosing not to expand the Region's designated greenfield area is a vital way for Oakville to combat climate change, preserve our natural heritage and prime agricultural land supply, and address many of the other challenges we face as we grow". It also notes that "avoiding any designated greenfield expansion also makes sense from a regional perspective for the same reasons".

As a result, it concludes that the preferred scenario for Oakville is the Region's 3B scenario, which does not propose a new designated greenfield expansion in Milton and Halton Hills¹. This scenario would replace the units that would otherwise have been built in new greenfield lands with additional apartment units in the existing greenfield areas. In the case of Oakville this would amount to 4,300 additional apartment units, which the report suggests would be allocated within the Trafalgar Road Corridor north of Dundas Street.

¹ Scenario 3A also would not include new greenfield designations. However, the Staff Discussion Paper indicates that Regional staff have recommended that the "A Scenarios" be rejected as they do not incorporate the policy work undertaken by the local municipalities since ROPA 38.

In our opinion, these conclusions are largely based on an ideological perspective with respect to intensification and are not the result of any substantive analysis. The Region has not yet finalized its criteria with regards to determining a preferred scenario, much less, conducted its own analysis. Given the lack of analysis undertaken, for Oakville staff to have arrived at an opinion as to the preferred scenario is, in the very best of lights, premature.

The following points summarize our opinion on why we have reached this conclusion and what additional analysis would be required to properly inform the Town as to a preferred scenario. At the request of our clients, we have also undertaken additional detailed research with regards to the Town's comments with regards to housing affordability.

Form of Development

The staff report makes multiple references as to the benefits of intensification compared to ground related development. Yet this is not a question that Oakville needs to address, as there is no potential for new designated greenfield lands in the Town to accommodate new ground related units. With respect to the Town, the Region's scenarios increase the number of apartments to varying degrees. At this point, the IGMS indicates that the new greenfield apartment units should be located in the Trafalgar Corridor north of Dundas. It is, however, vague in terms of where and how they could be accommodated within this area. The questions that Oakville need to address are how much additional apartment development is appropriate for the Town, if any, and how should it best be accommodated within the existing planned structure.

Cost of Infrastructure

The Town's memo asserts that "Existing Oakville residents will continue to pay for the maintenance of infrastructure to accommodate growth in other municipalities even if no future growth is directed to Oakville". Town staff further assert that this would create an "unfair tax burden on Oakville residents" This is an argument that Town staff use to suggest that additional apartments should be added to Oakville, rather than accommodate a portion of growth through greenfield development in Milton and Halton Hills.

This argument has no merit. Firstly, the Region's analysis indicated that the financial differences between the scenarios and infrastructure requirements are not significant. It is difficult to accept the Town's position given that it has undertaken no financial analysis of its own to refute the Region's findings.

It is also difficult to understand the logic in the Town's argument that the Town would experience a greater tax burden if development were directed to Milton and Halton Hills rather than to Oakville. The Town is suggesting that it would bear a portion of the costs for new development elsewhere in the Region through Regional property taxes. However, one could just as easily make the argument that under this scenario, it would also benefit from new Regional taxes available for projects in Oakville, without having to provide additional local infrastructure to support them.

Without having taken any financial analysis of its own, the Town has no basis for asserting that it would experience an unfair tax burden under any scenario whereby new greenfield lands were designated in Milton and Halton Hills.

Isolation of Seniors

The staff report asserts that "car-dependant, ground-oriented neighbourhoods do not often provide an opportunity for people to age in place as there are limited options for downsizing within one's own neighbourhood. There is also a risk that older residents may be isolated in their own homes". This statement appears to be more grounded in alarmist rhetoric than in any substantive analysis or research.

First of all, there is no evidence that seniors cannot be adequately housed in ground related units that are developed in proximity to a range of social, recreational, community and health services. In fact, this is a model that exists in thousands of communities across North America. There is also no analysis that suggests that seniors generally prefer apartments to ground related units, nor has the Town undertaken any analysis to suggest that there is a lack of housing choices for seniors in Halton, such that a senior who wished to move from a ground related home would not have not alternative. It is also important to recognize that many seniors who have lost the ability to drive, may also not be capable of using traditional modes of transit on their own, and, therefore would be dependant on alternative transportation options regardless of what type of housing unit in which they live.

Furthermore, ground related housing also provides a greater opportunity for caregivers, including family members to live with dependent seniors. This is not necessarily the case with regards to smaller bachelor or one-bedroom apartments.

The argument that ground-oriented neighbourhoods do not often provide an opportunity for people to age in place has not been substantiated in the staff Discussion Paper. Further analysis of seniors housing choices and requirements needs to be undertaken in order for Town staff to substantiate these assertions.

Affordable Housing

Affordability was identified as a key issue why the Town of Oakville has come out strongly in support of Scenario 3B. The Staff Report asserts that “A reliance on ground-oriented housing — single detached, semi-detached and townhouse units — will not result in housing that is affordable for the majority of the population. Should Oakville not accept and accommodate new growth in more compact, transit-oriented manner, it is not likely that Oakville will be able to facilitate the provision of market housing at an affordable price for its citizens.”

It is important to recognize that the Provincial Growth Plan calls for the development of “a range and mix of housing options to serve all sizes, incomes and ages of households”. It does not recommend that only one type of housing format be developed exclusively over all others, which, in contrast, seems to be the position of Oakville staff by supporting only that option which maximizes new apartment development in Oakville and rejecting all options that include additional greenfield development elsewhere in the Region.

In our opinion, the Town’s comments with regards to housing affordability were not based on any research, and are fundamentally untrue, when it comes to comparing between ground related units in Milton and Halton Hills to apartment units in Oakville:

- Townhomes in Halton Hills and Milton are generally much less expensive to purchase than apartments in the Oakville Uptown Core and North Oakville, both on a per square foot basis and when comparing units with a similar number of bedrooms.
- The cost to construct a single family or townhome unit in Milton and Halton Hills is also well below the construction cost for a comparable sized apartment unit in Oakville.
- Current development charges on a per person basis are also less expensive for townhomes in Milton and Halton Hills than they are for apartment units in Oakville.
- Restricting the supply of ground related units in Milton and Halton Hills will simply drive up the price of townhomes and other ground related homes across the Region and, either force homebuyers to purchase apartments, which are more expensive to build and buy, or cause them to seek ground related units outside of the Region, which would increase commuting costs.

Current Sale Prices

Figure 1 summarizes the price per square foot for projects currently selling in Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills. As noted from this figure, the price per square foot for high-rise apartment units in Oakville (Uptown Core) ranges from \$647 to \$737, compared with between \$357 to \$487 per square foot for single detached, semi-detached and townhome units in Milton and Halton Hills. In other words, high-rise apartments in Oakville are priced on a per square foot basis at between 60% and 80% higher than comparably sized ground related units in Milton and Halton Hills. Even the two stacked townhome projects in Oakville are also generally higher in price per square than comparable sized ground related units in Halton Hills and Milton.

While it may be perceived that apartments in Oakville are less expensive than ground related units, this is only because most apartment units are substantially smaller than ground related units.

Figures 2 and 3 compare the prices for 3 and more bedroom townhomes and semi-detached homes in Milton with apartments with 2 and more bedrooms in the Oakville Uptown Core and Dundas Street. There are no comparable units currently being marketed in Halton Hills. As noted by these Figures, the average price for a 3+bedroom townhome is considerably lower than the range for 3+bedroom apartments in Oakville (\$657,000 vs. \$757,000 to \$940,000). The average semi-detached price would be within the range for an apartment with a comparable number of bedrooms.

It would be a fallacy to suggest that a family of four seeking a three-bedroom unit could satisfy their housing needs in a 610 square foot apartment unit. While a 1,360 square foot apartment unit (the largest available in the area), may possibly satisfy their space needs, apartment units this size are selling for approximately \$1 million – over \$300,000 more than an average 3-bedroom townhome in Milton. It is also worth noting that the average townhome in Milton is 34% larger than the largest apartment marketed in Oakville, while the average semi-detached unit is almost 85% larger than the largest apartment in Oakville.

As a result, it is not true that building apartment units within the Trafalgar Corridor while placing a moratorium on further greenfield development in Milton and Halton Hills will lead to greater housing affordability in the Region. In fact, it will likely produce the opposite effect.

Figure 1: Comparison of Marketing Residential Developments in Oakville, Halton Hills and Milton

Municipality	Project Name	Project Type	Currently Available \$/SF
Oakville	Oakvillage	High-Rise- 15 Storeys	\$673
Oakville	Oakvillage 2	High-Rise- 20 Storeys	\$737
Oakville	Oak & Co.	High-Rise- 25 Storeys	\$647
Oakville	Oak & Co. Tower IIII	High-Rise- 14 Storeys	\$673
Oakville	Sixth	Stacked Townhomes	\$442
Oakville	Biddington	Stacked Townhomes	\$493
Milton	Arbor Peaks	Single Detached	\$423
Milton	Jasper Village	Semi-Detached	\$357
Milton	Abbeys on the Sixteenth	Townhouse	\$364
Milton	Main Street Village	Semi-Detached	\$366
Halton Hills	Chase	Single Detached	\$459
Halton Hills	Hello Georgetown	Single Detached	\$487

SOURCE: urbanMetrics inc., based on actively listed projects on RealNet.

NOTE: Pricing figures shown for Milton and Halton Hills represent the midpoint of pricing ranges provided across available units in each development.

Figure 2: Sales Prices of Currently Marketing Apartments (Oakville Uptown Core and Vicinity)

Development	Unit Type	No. of Units	Unit Size		Price Range		\$/SF Range	
			Unit Size (Low)	Unit Size (High)	Price Range (Low)	Price Range (High)	\$/SF (Low)	\$/SF (High)
Oak & Co. - Tower II	3 BEDROOM & UP	3	989	989	\$634,450	\$634,450	\$642	\$642
District Trailside (Apartment)	3 BEDROOM & UP	25	1,060	1,360	\$769,900	\$989,900	\$726	\$728
Oak & Co. - Tower III	3 BEDROOM & UP	2	1,201	1,201	\$777,900	\$777,900	\$648	\$648
Average			1,062	1,312	\$756,888	\$940,222	\$712	\$714

SOURCE: urbanMetrics inc. based on actively listed projects on CoStar.

Figure 3: Average Sales Prices of Currently Marketing Townhomes and Semis (Milton)

	Average Size (SF)	Average Price	Minimum Price	Maximum Price	Average Price Per Square Foot
Semi Detached Home Sales (3 and 4 Bedroom)	2,457	\$826,542	\$749,000	\$870,000	\$337
Townhome Sales (3 and 4 Bedroom)	1,760	\$686,971	\$613,990	\$799,990	\$393

SOURCE: urbanMetrics inc. based on actively listed projects on CoStar.

Construction Costs

As with sale prices, the cost to construct a high-rise apartment unit is substantially more than the cost to construct ground related units, due to (a) the cost of materials – i.e. wood vs. steel/concrete; (b) the need for underground parking; (c) the added cost of vertical construction.

The 2019 Altus Construction Cost Guide (See Figure 4), identifies the construction cost per square foot of condominium apartments in the GTA of up to 39 storeys of between \$180 to \$265 per square foot

of gross building area, which includes hallways, lobbies, and other communal areas. Assuming a factor of 15% to account for communal areas, the above 1,360 square foot apartment would actually require 1,564 square feet of gross building area and would cost between about \$280,000 and \$415,000 to construct. However, in addition to this would be the cost of underground parking. The Oakville zoning by-law 2009-189 requires that for buildings of more than four storeys in the Trafalgar Urban Core, resident parking must be underground, with a requirement for 1.25 spaces per unit. Guest parking at 0.2 spaces per unit can be constructed at the surface. Based on the Altus cost guide, this would add another \$34,500 to \$48,000 to the construction of an apartment unit². As a result, the total construction cost of the 1,360 square foot apartment unit would be between \$315,000 and \$463,000 – or \$200 to \$340 per square foot.

Figure 4: GTA Construction Costs Per Square Foot GFA

	\$ Per Square Foot Gross Floor Area	
	Low	High
Condominium/Apartment		
Up to 6 storeys	\$180	\$250
Up to 12 storeys	\$185	\$265
13-39 storeys	\$190	\$255
Premium for High Quality	\$75	\$200
Parking		
Surface	\$8	\$20
Above Grade Structure	\$75	\$110
Underground - Multi Level	\$115	\$160
Underground - Single Level Only	\$90	\$120
Wood Frame Residential		
Row Townhouse with Unfinished Basement	\$105	\$160
Single Family Residential with Unfinished Basement	\$115	\$215
3-Storey stacked Townhouse	\$135	\$180
Up to 4-storey wood framed condo	\$150	\$200
5 - 6 storey wood framed condo	\$160	\$215
Custom Built Single Family Residential	\$400	\$900

SOURCE: urbanMetrics inc., based on data obtained from the 2019 Altus Construction Guide

². According to the Altus cost guide, multi level parking costs between \$115 and \$160 per square foot. The average parking space is 150 square feet and including vehicle movement areas would require approximately 300 square feet of building area. This would amount to between \$34,500 and \$48,000 per unit.

By comparison, the cost to construct the 1,760 square foot townhome, based on the Altus cost guide would be between \$105 to \$160 per square foot, or between, \$185,000 to \$280,000, significantly lower than the much smaller apartment unit. Unlike the apartment unit, a townhome unit would not have common areas or underground parking which would inflate the per unit costs.

As a result, the cost of constructing much larger townhome units is substantially less than the cost to build apartment units.

It is also important to note that land values would also enter into the equation of affordability, as they are directly related to the developers perceived profitability and are impacted by servicing status, development readiness, height and density permissions, the previous purchase price, and other factors. While ground related units require more land than apartments, it does not necessarily follow that on a per unit basis, land prices for ground related units are more expensive than the land required for apartment units.

Recent land transaction data compiled by urbanMetrics, shows low density residential land at an average of \$450,000 per acre in Milton and \$289,000 per acre in Halton Hills (See Figure 3).

Assuming a mix of townhomes and detached housing at 7 to 8 units per gross acre, this would equate to a range of approximately \$36,000 to \$64,000 per lot.

Figure 5: Low Density Vacant Land Sales in Milton and Halton Hills

Municipality	Address	Transaction Date	Purchase Price	Acres	\$/Acre	NOTES
Milton	5526 Fourth Line	Jan-18	\$16,000,000	25.06	\$638,468	Currently used as a farm - the site is intended to be future residential
Milton	6081 Tremaine Road	Mar-19	\$3,000,000	3.53	\$849,858	Great Gulf Acquired - future residential
Milton	9470 Britannia Road	Sep-16	\$5,300,000	9.77	\$542,477	Purchased by Fernbrook Homes - Currently zoned commercial
Milton	5368 Fifth Line	Jan-16	\$17,900,000	35.18	\$322,581	Land zoned for residential use - purchased by STATE building Group
Average Milton			\$42,100,000	93.54	\$450,075	
Halton Hills	Trafalgar Road	Aug-18	\$55,000,000	96.06	\$572,559	Land zoned for residential use
Halton Hills	9258 Tenth Line	Oct-18	\$25,000,000	156.28	\$159,969	Land zoned for residential use
Halton Hills	102 Confederation Street	Jul-19	\$5,000,000	46.18	\$108,272	Land zoned for residential use
Halton Hills	12399 15 Sideroad	Nov-17	\$6,300,000	17	\$382,353	Total lands purchased are 89 acres - only 17 acres are developable, the remaining is environmentally protected
Average Halton Hills			\$91,500,000	315.52	\$289,997	

SOURCE: urbanMetrics, based on CoStar.

There are no comparable recent land transactions in North Oakville, owing to limited demand at this time. Figure 6 illustrates land transactions for high density apartment sites across the GTA during the third quarter of 2019. Many of these are in the City of Toronto, with the average at about \$150 per square foot of buildable area. An example of areas that might be more comparable to North Oakville, include: Downtown Oakville at \$124; Downtown Burlington at \$82 per square foot; Aurora at \$80 per square foot; Brooklin at \$53 per square foot; Richmond Hill at \$78 per square foot and Woodbridge at \$53 per square foot. Even at the lowest end of the range, the land costs for a 1,255 square foot apartment (1,443 sf gba) would amount to between \$76,000 and \$118,000.

Figure 6: Land Value of High Density Residential Sites in the GTA

Month of Date	Neighbourhood	Number of Records	Avg. Size (Acres)	Avg. Total GFA	Avg. Storeys	Avg. Price	Avg. Price per-buildable-SF	Avg. Est Revenue PSF	Avg. PPSF/Revenue
July	Downsview	1	0.5	84,454	9	\$5,020,000	\$59	\$740	8.0%
	Downtown Burlington	1	0.0	219,619	18	\$1,250,000	\$82	\$850	9.6%
	Eglinton West	1	0.1	34,239	8	\$1,325,000	\$183	\$895	20.5%
	Forest Hill	2	0.4	55,933	8	\$6,712,500	\$113	\$925	11.6%
	Golden Mile	1	18.0	2,600,000	16	\$105,000,000	\$40	\$760	5.3%
	Regent Park	1	0.3	235,965	34	\$27,255,476	\$116	\$1,075	10.7%
	South Midtown	1	0.2	173,000	28	\$22,104,443	\$312	\$1,300	24.0%
	St. Lawrence	1	0.3	305,213	45	\$73,483,784	\$241	\$1,275	18.9%
	Vaughan Corporate Centre	1	0.9	182,250	25	\$10,000,000	\$109	\$830	13.1%
	Yorkville	1	0.6	299,564	29	\$170,700,000	\$570	\$2,500	22.8%
	Total	11	2.0	386,015	21	\$39,051,246	\$176	\$1,098	14.2%
August	Aurora	1	0.3	23,366	4	\$1,880,000	\$80	\$685	11.7%
	Brooklin	1	4.1	94,435	6	\$5,000,000	\$53	\$685	7.7%
	Danforth Village	1	3.4	271,780	10	\$15,040,000	\$55	\$715	7.7%
	Downtown Oakville	1	0.1	13,750	4	\$1,700,000	\$124	\$1,250	9.9%
	Entertainment District	1	0.4	414,142	57	\$38,000,000	\$123	\$1,385	8.9%
	Five Points	1	0.1	180,792	18	\$3,500,000	\$115	\$960	12.0%
	Forest Hill	1	0.1	75,000	9	\$2,150,000	\$174	\$1,005	17.3%
	Richmond Hill	1	1.8	318,518	18	\$24,875,000	\$78	\$830	9.4%
	Roncesvalles	1	0.3	44,550	9	\$4,500,000	\$193	\$1,060	18.2%
	South Midtown	1	0.1	516,050	34	\$8,310,000	\$214	\$1,175	18.2%
	West Hill	1	1.1	195,750	12	\$5,790,000	\$30	\$675	4.4%
	Yonge & Eglinton	1	0.4	346,059	48	\$63,000,000	\$182	\$1,130	16.1%
	Total	12	1.0	207,849	19	\$14,478,750	\$118	\$963	11.8%
September	Downtown Core	1	0.0	362,725	55	\$6,333,000	\$133	\$1,375	9.7%
	Downtown East	1	0.9	509,159	28	\$107,000,000	\$210	\$1,250	16.8%
	Greektown	1	0.3	54,156	8	\$7,300,000	\$135	\$865	15.6%
	Riverdale	1	0.3	66,070	6	\$11,675,000	\$318	\$1,025	31.1%
	Woodbridge	1	1.9	77,501	4	\$4,100,000	\$53	\$750	7.1%
Total	5	0.7	213,922	20	\$27,281,600	\$170	\$1,053	16.0%	
Total / Average	28	1.3	278,928	20	\$26,418,454	\$150	\$1,032	13.5%	

Source: GTA Highrise Land Insights Report, 3rd Quarter 2019, Bullpen Consulting

While these land transaction figures should be used cautiously, they indicate that land for high rise residential development can be much more expensive on a per unit basis than land for ground related units. The land value for apartments in Oakville will invariably increase if other options are restricted.

This construction cost and land value data, however, indicates that apartment units in the Trafalgar Corridor in North Oakville are not the most affordable housing option when compared with ground related units in Milton and Halton Hills.

Property Tax Assessment and Development Charges

The staff report also comments that the tax assessment for a single detached home in Oakville is at least 2.5 times the weighted assessment for an apartment unit. This is a somewhat unfair comparison as there is a very substantial difference in sizes between apartments and single detached homes. In addition, the comparison should not be between apartments and single detached homes in Oakville, but rather apartments in Oakville vs. other housing types in Milton and Halton Hills, for which there is a much narrower gap. In fact, the average assessed value of an apartment in Oakville actually exceeds the average assessed value of a multiple unit (e.g. townhomes and other medium density

types) in Halton Hills and Milton, according to the IGMS. So that the Oakville staff conclusion that the scenario that maximizes apartment development in Oakville is the most affordable option is not valid.

Recognizing that servicing costs are dependent on the nature of new development and that Bill 108, if approved will impact how development charges are determined, it is still important to recognize that on a per person basis, development charges are less expensive for ground related units in Milton and Halton Hills than they are for apartments in Oakville. For example, as per the current development charge rates in Oakville and Halton Region, the combined local and regional development charge for apartments with 2 or more units would amount to \$45,848³. The 2015 Oakville Development Charges Background Study uses the future persons per household ratio for apartments with 2 or more units is projected at 1.94. This would equate to a development charge of \$23,633 per new resident. By comparison the combined current development charge for a single detached unit in Milton would be \$73,582⁴. The 2015 Milton Development Charges Background Study estimates that the person per household ratio for future single detached units will be 3.52, which equates to a development charge per new resident of \$20,904 – over \$2,700 below the apartment rate in Oakville. Similarly, the combined local and regional development charge for a townhome (3 or more bedrooms) in Halton Hills is \$55,797⁵. The person per household figure projected by the 2017 Halton Hills Development Charge Background Study amounts to 2.810, resulting in a development charge per person of \$19,856 per person or over \$3,700 less expensive than an apartment in Oakville.

While these rates will change as development charges in each community are updated, they do indicate that the Option 3B will not necessarily result in lower development charges. In that development charges are a component of housing costs, the current development charges across the region would further support that ground related units in Milton and Halton Hills are a more affordable option than apartments in North Oakville.

Impacts of Constraining Land Supply for Ground Related Units

From an economic perspective, when the supply of a commodity is constrained it will result in price escalation. While a more in-depth analysis is required as to the actual housing demand in Halton Region, assuming that there will still be demand for ground related units between 2031 and 2041, the impact of not permitting further development of greenfield land will invariably result in price

³ Current Oakville charge for apartments as of November 2019 is \$19,654. The current Halton Region Charge (Greenfield Recovery Area, and Front Ending) amounts to \$26,194.

⁴ Current Milton charge for single detached units as of November 2019 is \$20,682. The current Halton Region Charge for single detached units (Greenfield Recovery Area, and Front Ending) amounts to \$52,900.

⁵ Current Halton Hills charge for a townhome (3 or more units) as of November 2019 is \$13,624. The current Halton Region Charge (Greenfield Recovery Area and Front Ending) is \$42,173.

increases for existing single family, semi-detached and townhome units in the Region, and/or persons choosing to live outside of the Region to purchase their desired housing type.

On the other hand, the increase in apartment units in Oakville may not necessarily result increased affordability owing to the fact that apartments are more expensive to construct than ground related units and the lack of alternative housing types would stimulate an artificial demand for high density formats above that which would otherwise exist. Finally, apartment units are not a suitable or desirable housing format for all families, so by restricting the supply of ground related units, the result would be to cause families to locate in units substandard to their needs at a higher cost than they would otherwise pay for a ground related unit.

In our opinion, in a market such as Halton, townhomes, semi-detached and small lot singles are important in terms of ensuring an affordable supply of family homes, and cannot simply be replaced by small lower cost apartments. Without a more detailed understanding of the local housing market, the comments in the Oakville staff report regarding housing affordability lack validity.

Access to Transit and Active Transportation

The staff report notes that “Higher-order transit must become the preferred method of transportation for a large number of people in Oakville in order to combat traffic congestion”. While there is some merit in this statement with regards to the urbanized portions of the Region, what the report fails to note is that the potential areas identified by the Region’s IGMS for new designated greenfield lands are generally as close or closer to an existing or proposed mobility hub or major transit station as is the Trafalgar corridor in North Oakville. In addition, the new potentially designated greenfield areas are generally well located with respect to existing and proposed employment areas, potentially providing for a strong live-work relationship, supporting both additional transit and active transportation options.

Town staff’s comments in this regard, lack a clear understanding of the options presented in the IGMS report and tend to be based on very high level planning principals rather than a comprehensive assessment of options and strategies put forward by the Region.

Lack of Understanding of the Market

In general, the Town’s comments lack any analysis of the residential market in Halton Region or Oakville. Town staff have undertaken no research with regards to existing or future demographic trends that will drive housing choices in Halton Region or the geography of the housing market in the Region. An inherent flaw in the logic of the Town’s staff report is that apartment units in the Trafalgar corridor in Oakville would be equal in preference to ground related or other types of housing units in Milton and Halton Hills. Not only are there significant functional differences between housing types, but Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville are decidedly different housing markets. It is unreasonable to

assume that a family seeking a townhome in Halton Hills would be equally likely to purchase an apartment in North Oakville. Before any conclusion can be made as to the most appropriate strategy to accommodate future development in Halton can be made, market research needs to be undertaken to fully understand the future need for housing types and location.

Conclusion

In summary, the staff report conclusion that the Town should reject the IGMS options that would open new greenfield development area in Halton Hills and Milton in favour of new apartment development in North Oakville has not been reached based on any substantive research. Rather it is an opinion based on very broad planning ideals, that bear no relationship to local market or economic conditions.

In conclusion, without additional research and analysis with regards to market, economic and financial factors, the conclusions reached by Town staff are not reliable.

It was a pleasure to conduct this analysis on your behalf. We would be pleased to discuss our findings with you in more detail.

Yours truly,

urbanMetrics inc.



Rowan Faludi

Partner

rfaludi@urbanMetrics.ca

March 24, 2020

Chairman Carr and Members of Regional Council

Region of Halton

1151 Bronte Road, Oakville Ontario L6M 3L1

Dear Chairman Carr:

RE: Response to Integrated Growth Management Strategy Growth Scenarios Halton Region to 2041
Attachment #4 to LPS 41-19

I am writing to you on behalf of the North Oakville Community Builders Inc. (NOCBI). The following is their response to the report entitled Integrated Growth Management Strategy Growth Scenarios: Halton Region to 2041.

We note that there has been no formal consultation process with the development industry on the IGMS by the Region to date although staff were directed to consult with BILD. The IGMS study process must be open and transparent with engagement of all members of the community including the development industry. A fulsome engagement throughout the process will assist in all voices being heard and a more successful outcome for the IGMS process.

Through our review we have identified a number of questions and concerns with the approach and recommendations within the report which are set out below.

Any preferred growth scenario must be based upon the current and in effect Places to Grow Plan. Using a previous Growth Plan which no longer has legal status as the basis for planning growth for the future is simply not appropriate. The development industry, for any development application, would not be permitted to rely upon out of date legislation or policy framework. The same standard should be used by the Region in developing and assessing growth options through the IGMS process.

The IGMS report envisions a significant change in built form and densities beyond that which the market currently or is anticipated to support. The report acknowledges the significant and serious challenges and realistic possibility that these changes to the market will not be achieved. Scenario 3B sets out the option with the greatest departure from current market realities. We note that this Scenario was supported by the Town of Oakville. Attached to this letter is a letter prepared by urbanMetrics setting out a number of issues with Scenario 3B and the errors in the assumptions used in that evaluation.

The new Provincial Policy Statement refers to the provision of a market-based range and mix of housing. This new PPS will be in force and effect prior to the amendment implementing the IGMS comes forward.

Market based range and mix of housing should be considered as part of the next step of the study process and the scenarios revised and amended accordingly. The IGMS analysis is based on two thirds of all apartment units in the 2030's accommodating larger family households. The report notes that this will be achieved by empty nesters moving from their homes to apartments and young families will chose to move to apartments instead of ground related housing. This does not reflect a market-based range and mix of housing. Equally it will not result in more affordable housing in the Region as set out in the attached letter. A realistic, defensible, implementable plan for growth is needed for Halton.

We have undertaken a detailed review of the background information provided by the local municipalities regarding the capacity of the existing DGA to accommodate the projected growth set out within the IGMS report. The vast majority of the numbers used within the IGMS report were able to be verified through other reports completed at the local level. We were challenged to find the background documents that confirmed the Town of Oakville numbers especially the assertions regarding the capacity to accommodate growth within the Oakville existing DGA. The IGMS Report states that "the identified unit potential in North Oakville is now significantly higher than originally contemplated for North Oakville under the North Oakville Secondary Plan. The potential for many more ground related units and apartment units in the Trafalgar Corridor was identified under the recent Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 321. Based on recent work completed by the Town, more than 50,000 units may be accommodated in the Oakville DGA." We have undertaken a review of the background materials to OPA 321 and cannot find any documentation that references or supports an additional 50,000 units especially since OPA 321 only increased the minimum density from 68 upha to 72 upha within the Trafalgar Corridor.

Other numbers that are suspect for the Town of Oakville included within the report are an additional 1,468 units in Downtown Oakville and 3,021 in Palermo as well as 14,393 units along Trafalgar Core (excluding Midtown and Uptown) within the BUA boundary with 9,162 units outside of identified nodes and growth areas. It is very difficult to see how these numbers will be achieved based on the current planning context, the land available for redevelopment for these new units, as well as current community context.

We are requesting that the Region make publicly available the Information and rationale provided by the Town of Oakville to support the numbers used in this report.

We noted that the report states that for all scenarios, the Natural Heritage System and Greenbelt boundaries were maintained as currently mapped. It is noted that any proposed changes to the NHS resulting from the ongoing NHS review as part this process would result in the need to re-evaluate land supply and the potential land needs for urban expansions.

Regarding the financial impact of the various scenarios, we do note that the report contains conflicting positions on this matter. Firstly, the report states that there are minimal differences in the financial impacts of the scenarios. The report then states that one of the challenges is the sequencing of development and the infrastructure requirements and investments. Financing of infrastructure is included in the criteria for evaluating the scenarios. We anticipate that each of the scenarios will have a differing order of magnitude regarding costing of the required infrastructure and would encourage the

region to assess and discuss this with the development community prior to proceeding with a preferred option. Affordability of housing is driven by all of the costs included in the housing price including development charges and municipal fees. There is a direct correlation between the cost of growth and the price of housing. If affordability of housing is an issue for the Region, the cost and financing of infrastructure is an important element of this growth analysis.

Appendix C to the Report sets out the Evaluation Framework for the scenarios. The objectives as set out are reasonable starting points for an evaluation framework. The Evaluation questions could be broadened to include additional the matters for consideration. specific scenario by the Region. For example there are only two measures proposed to assess the objective of complete communities. These are protection of the NHS and Agriculture and contiguous development patterns. Building complete communities is a much broader concept then just these two measures. The use of the terminology "ranks the highest" in the measures does not allow for relative ranking of competing priorities. They are prejudicial and are structured to predetermine the selection of one specific scenario by the Region. The proposed measures need significant reconsideration prior to the next stage of the study process.

NOCBI looks forward to working with the Region throughout this study process. Should you have any questions regarding the above information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,



Ruth Victor MCIP, RPP, MRTPI

cc. Mr. Curt Benson, Director of Planning Services

Mr Mark Simeoni, Director of Planning Town of Oakville

September 8, 2020

By E-mail to townclerk@oakville.ca

Mayor Rob Burton and Members of Council
Town Hall
1225 Trafalgar Rd
Oakville, Ontario
L6H 0H3

Attention: Town Clerk, Town of Oakville

Your Worship and Members of Council:

**Re: North Oakville Community Builders Inc.
Comments regarding Regional Official Plan Review -
Regional Natural Heritage System Discussion Paper
North Oakville East Secondary Plan
Staff Report Dated August 26, 2020**

We are counsel to North Oakville Community Builders Inc. (“NOCBI”). NOCBI is trustee to the North Oakville East Developers Group (the “NOCBI Group”), which is comprised of a number of landowners within the North Oakville East Secondary Plan area. Land use in this area is governed, at the local level, by Town of Oakville (the “Town”) Official Plan Amendment No. 272 (“OPA 272”), being the North Oakville East Secondary Plan.

Our client has had an opportunity to review the Planning and Development Services Department staff report dated August 26, 2020 entitled *Regional Official Plan Review – Regional Discussion Papers* (the “Report”). The Report includes comments on the Natural Heritage System (“NHS”) provisions in the Regional Discussion Paper.

Section 116.2 of the current Regional Official Plan (the “ROP” or “ROPA 38”) directly recognizes the NHS provisions in OPA 272 in the following provision:

Notwithstanding Section 116.1, within the North Oakville East Secondary Plan Area, the Regional Natural Heritage System will be delineated and implemented in accordance with the Town of Oakville Official Plan Amendment No. 272.

We agree with the following observations of Town staff set out at page 9 of the Report:

- Part of the Regional Natural Heritage System (the “Regional NHS”) review includes North Oakville (of which the North Oakville East Secondary Plan area is a part);
- The current ROP states that the Regional NHS within the North Oakville East Secondary Plan area will be delineated and implemented in accordance with OPA 272;
- North Oakville (of which North Oakville East is a part) is an area of greenfield development where the North Oakville Secondary Plans (of which OPA 272 is one) are being implemented through the development approval process, including plans of subdivision and zoning by-law amendments;
- As part of this process, the actual Regional NHS boundaries are being confirmed through detailed Environmental Implementation Report/Functional Servicing Studies in accordance with the policies of the North Oakville Secondary Plans, including OPA 272; and,
- That lands subject to development approvals only cover a portion of the North Oakville East lands.

Our client shares staff’s concern, expressed at pages 11 and 12 of the Report, that Halton Region (the “Region” or “Halton”) is considering a policy change in establishing Regional NHS requirements in North Oakville, including North Oakville East. That change would use June 2018 as a benchmark date and base future Regional NHS obligations in North Oakville on the planned NHS from the North Oakville Secondary Plans (including OPA 272) and not the actual NHS resulting from the studies in accordance with the policies of those plans. Accordingly, as development advances within North Oakville East, the proposed policies would diverge from the NHS provisions in OPA 272.

Our client acknowledges that, in accordance with Town staff’s recommendation in the Report, the Region should incorporate an annual review of the Regional NHS boundary in North Oakville (including North Oakville East) to ensure that it does not become out of date with current development approvals, provided that the updates are premised on the continued delineation of the NHS boundary as established in accordance with the NHS policies in OPA 272, as currently provided for in section 116.2 of the ROP. We note that many of the provincial plan matters identified in the ROP review discussion papers do not affect North Oakville East or, consistent with OPA 272 study requirements, would be addressed through the current planning process set out in policy for North Oakville East.

Our client is concerned that nowhere in the NHS Discussion Paper, does the Region commit to carrying forward a provision the same as or similar to section 116.2 in the new ROP.

In the process leading up to the approval of OPA 272, extensive environmental work was undertaken, including the subwatershed studies, and following lengthy settlement discussions, leading edge NHS policies established boundaries and ongoing study requirements to further delineate the NHS boundaries over time. The NHS policies in

OPA 272 have worked well for over a decade and have resulted in the orderly provision of NHS lands within North Oakville East.

OPA 272 was intended to be a long-term planning document to be implemented over the North Oakville East planning horizon and was reflected in Minutes of Settlement entered into between the Town and the North Oakville East landowners. Those Minutes of Settlement contemplate a 30-year horizon for the application of the NHS policies in OPA 272.

We ask that the Town recommend that the Region include a section, the same or similar to (if any modification is necessary to accommodate provincially-mandated policy changes) section 116.2 of the current ROP in the new ROP update.

CONTEXT

Halton is undertaking a Regional Official Plan Review (“ROPR”). The ROPR was commenced on April 16, 2014. The last comprehensive review of the Regional Official Plan (the “ROP”) was the Sustainable Halton Process completed in 2009 that resulted in Regional Official Plan Amendments (“ROPAs”) 37, 38 and 39, which implemented, *inter alia*, the policies of the Growth Plan 2006 and the Greenbelt Plan 2005.

The Natural Heritage Discussion Paper, prepared by the Region, states, at page 4, that through the ROPR, specific theme areas and policies will be updated based on changing demographics, evolving land use trends and changes to the provincial policy regime.

The ROPR is being undertaken in three phases: Phase 1 was completed in October 2016 through the endorsement of the “Directions Report” which outlined the tasks and deliverables to be undertaken in the remaining two phases of the ROPR; Phase 2, is centred on the production of five discussion papers researching and analyzing potential options to address the five ROPR key theme areas (Integrated Growth Management Strategy, Climate Change, Rural Agricultural System, Natural Heritage and North Aldershot Planning Area) which have now been released for public comment, after which a Growth Concepts Discussion Paper will be prepared and released for public comment, after which a Preferred Growth Concept and Consultation Summary will be prepared; and, Phase 3, the policy drafting phase of the ROPR, which will be informed by the work in Phase 2 and comments received in the commenting periods and which is anticipated to commence in April 2021. It is anticipated that a draft ROPA will be released for public comment in the early Fall of 2021 with the final ROPA being adopted in November of that year.

BACKGROUND

OPA 272 was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in January 2008 after extensive negotiations and settlement discussions. OPA 272 was intended to be a long-term planning document.

Extensive work was done through the OPA 272 process, including the subwatershed study and through very lengthy settlement discussions which established a natural heritage system (“NHS”) along with policies that govern that system, its boundaries, study requirements and its permitted uses including policies governing Optional Linkages.

ROPA 38 was adopted by Regional Council on December 16, 2009. The NOCBI Group actively participated in the planning process leading to the adoption of ROPA 38, which included the filing of written submissions. Once ROPA 38 was forwarded to the Minister for approval, the NOCBI Group engaged in settlement negotiations with Regional and Provincial staff which resulted in the modification of ROPA 38 to include section 116.2. The inclusion of this section was a recognition of the quantity and quality of the environmental work that had gone into the development of the NHS policy regime in OPA 272 and its ground-breaking nature.

We respectfully submit that this policy regime should continue to be implemented until its stated planning horizon and only amended as absolutely necessary to implement a provincially-mandated requirement.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, we ask that the Town request the Region confirm that section 116.2 will be carried forward into the new updated ROP and only amended as absolutely necessary to implement a provincially-mandated policy change.

Thank you in advance for considering our comments. We are available to discuss with Council or staff as required.

Yours truly,
DAVIES HOWE LLP



Daniel H. Steinberg

Copy: Mr. Gary Carr, Chair, Region of Halton (by e-mail)
NOCBI Group (by e-mail)

ROPR NATURAL HERITAGE DISCUSSION PAPER QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Prepared by Savanta Inc., R. J. Burnside & Associates and Stonybrook Consulting
October 30, 2020

Question 1: As required by the Growth Plan, 2019, the new Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan mapping and policies must be incorporated into the Regional Official Plan. Based on the three (3) options discussed above, what is the best approach to incorporate the NHSGP into the ROP?

The Growth Plan NHS and the Greenbelt Plan NHS policies clearly do not apply to the RNHS in Settlement Areas. While Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan NHS policies are generally aligned, we expect that differing policies, permissions, terminology and definitions in the current RNHS introduce many challenges to combining the provincial NHSs with current RNHS policies where they apply to Settlement Areas. Any approach taken must preserve the policy structure and content applicable to Settlement Areas that provide appropriate permissions recognizing urban uses and supporting infrastructure.

Question 2: RNHS policies were last updated through ROPA 38. Are the current goals and objectives for the RNHS policies still relevant/appropriate? How can the ROP be revised further to address these goals and objectives?

Section 114 of the ROP states, “The goal of the Natural Heritage System is to increase the certainty that the biological diversity and ecological functions within Halton will be preserved and enhanced for future generations.” The NHDP notes that this goal has supported the application of the precautionary principle in relation to analysis of proposed NHS impact avoidance and mitigation measures (i.e., faced with uncertainty, err on the side of being conservative in the protection of natural heritage components).

With reference to the above goal, the NHDP includes discussion on an option to enshrine a new precautionary principle in policy. With respect to Section 114, the NHDP notes,

“In the Successes section above, ROP 114 was identified as critical in supporting a precautionary principle approach to protecting the NHS. This policy has been interpreted that there has to be a high degree of confidence that proposed protection and mitigation measures will work. It draws on the concept of “Landscape Permanence” in the Vision as justification for erring on the conservative side when it comes to mitigation like buffer widths and appropriate uses in the buffers”.

NOCBI does not support adding specific reference to a precautionary principle to ROP policy. Current ROP RNHS policies and mapping provide detailed direction on the protection, restoration and management of the RNHS and requirements for future studies. Including specific reference to a precautionary principle will not add clarity but rather will leave many policies wide open to interpretation, thereby adding increased uncertainty to policy interpretation.

Question 3: Based on the discussion provided above, to ease the implementation of buffers and vegetation protection zones, should the Region include more detailed policies describing minimum standards?

The NHDP discusses an option to include new policies for minimum buffers or vegetation protection zones for different natural heritage feature types, as was done in the Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan NHS (that applies only outside of Settlement Areas). It also suggests that the role and use of the Region's Buffer Refinement Framework (2017) could be clarified through policy or Council endorsed guidelines.

- **Minimum Buffers** - With respect to Settlement Areas, the inclusion of new policies describing minimum standards to ease the implementation of buffers is not supported. Buffers should not be pre-determined or minimums established without the appropriate level of study of the type and sensitivity of specific natural heritage features, the type of adjacent land use, identification of other mitigative measures, etc., that can only be addressed in detail through future area-specific or site-specific studies.
- **Region's Buffer Refinement Framework** - There has been much disagreement with the content and use of this document. The Framework is based on selective conclusions from the Ecological Buffer Guideline Review (CVC 2012). The Framework recommends a minimum 30m buffer from all Key Features and that limited refinements may be made through further study. We note that the CVC (2012) report identified several other considerations and conclusions not acknowledged in the Buffer Framework including:
 - not every feature requires a buffer;
 - buffers as little as 1m can be effective (depending on the feature and the potential impact);
 - a 30m buffer was not determined to be the best/only tool to protect natural features.

It is the NOCBI's position that the Buffer Refinement Framework should not be incorporated in policy or in any guidelines. They should be determined based on area-specific or site-specific studies when specific features and functions as well as adjacent land use are better understood and they can be identified along with other appropriate mitigation measures and balanced with all aspects of creating complete communities.

Question 5: The Greenbelt Plan 2017 and Growth Plan 2019 require municipalities to identify a Water Resource System (WRS) in Official Plans. Based on the two (2) options presented, how should the WRS be incorporated into the ROP?

The NHDP presents two options for the incorporation of the WRS into the ROP. It notes that a key consideration is whether the NHS and WRS should be addressed in an integrated fashion or separately. Options include combining NHS/WRS policies and mapping, or separating NHS/WRS policies and mapping. The NHDP notes that the approach to combining the NHS/WRS policies could present a common set of policies for Key Heritage Features and Key Hydrologic Features and a separate set of policies for Key Hydrologic Areas.

It is preferred that the NHS and WRS be addressed in separate policies. While there are functional relationships and overlap between the NHS and WRS, some policies applicable to the two systems are different including policies for Key Hydrologic Areas. We also expect that these policies will differ within

and outside of Settlement Areas. As such, Option 2 presented in the NHDP (addressing these systems separately) is preferred.

Question 9: The ROP is required to conform to the updated Natural Hazards policies in the PPS. What is the best approach to incorporate Natural Hazards policies and mapping?

Natural Hazards in the PPS include hazardous lands, flooding hazards, erosion hazards, dynamic beach hazards and wildland fire. We recognize that changes are needed to the ROP to incorporate direction from the PPS. The NHDP outlines three options for mapping of Natural Hazards including:

1. Create a separate Schedule in the ROP that maps the Natural Hazards;
2. On the RNHS schedule (Map 1G), show the Natural Hazards as an overlay; and
3. Do not map Natural Hazard in the ROP but rather include additional policies to direct the Local Municipalities to map Natural Hazards in their Official Plans.

Conservation Authorities have floodplain mapping for some but not all areas in their watersheds and the level of detail of their mapping varies which raises questions regarding the accuracy of the mapping. In many cases, they overlap with other NHS components and, unlike some NHS components may be modified, sometimes substantially. Conservation Authorities may issue permits for development and site alteration in floodplains. Therefore, if mapped at a regional scale, floodplains should be an overlay and policies should clearly permit modifications to floodplains based on site-specific studies.

Erosion hazard mapping is not typically mapped until area-specific or site-specific studies are completed as site-specific fieldwork and analyses are required to accurately do so. Erosion hazards cannot be reasonably be mapped at regional or local municipal scales and therefore should not be included in any regional mapping. Further, it is not reasonable to expect or necessary that local municipalities map erosion hazards in their official plans. Rather, policies should include the requirement to identify erosion hazards during area-specific and/or site-specific studies.

Question 10: How can Halton Region best support the protection and enhancement of significant woodlands, through land use policy?

The NHDP notes that through the next phase of the ROPR, consideration should be given to reviewing the definition of woodlands and significant woodlands to include quality, woodland changes over time and the MNRF Renewable Energy guidelines.

- **Woodland Quality** – The NHDP suggests that the definition of woodlands and significant woodlands be revised to include criteria to address the quality of the woodland (e.g., extent of invasive tree species and extent of presence of dead trees) in addition to the existing four criteria. The NHDP notes that the ‘Technical Definitions and Criteria for Key Natural Heritage Features in the Natural Heritage System of the Protected Countryside Area Paper’ (OMNR 2005 – updated 2012) considers woodland quality by considering the extent of non-native trees species present

within the woodland, and states that a decision is required whether this approach should be Region-wide or not. The NHDP continues by stating that non-native tree species, just like native tree species, help mitigate climate change, assist in maintaining a healthy hydrological cycle and provide wildlife habitat. It is suggesting that any changes to the definition of significant woodland must consider maintaining and enhancing such ecological functions as part of the NHS. The NHDP implies that consideration should be given to provide greater protection to woodlands characterized by invasive tree species.

However, further review of OMNR (2012) reveals that communities dominated by invasive non-native trees be considered an exclusion to significant woodlands, not an inclusion as implied in the NHDP:

‘Additional exclusions may be considered for communities which are dominated by the invasive non-native tree species Buckthorn (*Rhamnus* species) or Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) that threaten good forestry practices and environmental management. Such exceptions may be considered where native tree species cover less than 10% of the ground and are represented by less than 100 stems of any size per hectare.’

Therefore, it is not appropriate to include invasive tree species as a component of significant woodlands.

- **Woodland Changes** - The NHDP suggests that ROP 295, definition of ‘woodland’, should be similar to the Greenbelt Plan technical paper by including wording such as: ‘woodlands experiencing changes such as harvesting, blowdown or other tree mortality are still considered woodlands. Such changes are considered temporary whereby the forest still retains its long-term ecological value.’ This definition was created in 2012, prior to extreme weather events becoming more common and prior to the detrimental infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer. This provincial definition was also created specifically for woodlands within the Greenbelt Plan that are located within the Protected Countryside.

Including ‘or other tree mortality’ in the woodland definition could include some tree mortality scenarios that no longer support the structure or function of a woodland. For example, Emerald Ash Borer is currently impacting many woodlands. Consideration must be applied to the extent of the impact and the associated regeneration. If a canopy and sub-canopy have succumbed to the Ash Borer, the species composition and coverage of the understorey and ground cover should then determine the community type and function.

Therefore, revising the woodland definition to one that is similar to the Greenbelt Plan technical paper is not supported.

- Table 3, Implementation Comments, Successes and Barriers from the Policy Audit Technical Memo includes further discussion on possible changes to the Significant Woodland definition. Comment 80 includes the following:

“The PPS definition of Significant Woodland was revised in 2014 edition to include reference to “criteria established by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources”. The Region’s Significant Woodland criteria may require update to reflect MNRF criteria. Although the OMNR does not technically exist (OMNRF vs. OMNR) and the OMNRF has not established criteria that is linked explicitly to the PPS 2014, they frequently identify criteria developed for the purpose of Natural Heritage

Assessment for Green Energy Act Projects as a suitable proxy Guideline. They will likely request us to consider these as part of our review in relation to our Significant Woodlands definition.”

The use of the MNR's document relating to Green Energy Act Projects was clarified with MNRF Aurora District in December 2018. At that time, MNRF clarified that the Natural Heritage Reference Manual is the appropriate guidance to be used for residential projects as the Renewable Energy guide is applicable to specifically to energy projects. This revision is not supported.

- **Interpretation of Patches** - Based on experience with the current Significant Woodland definition, clarification would be helpful regarding the definition of 'patches' in the portion Policy 277(1) referring to forest *patches* over 99 years old (italics added for emphasis). 'Patch' is not defined in the ROP. The wording should be clarified (i.e., the Woodland contains an abundant amount of native trees over 99 years old).

- LEGEND
- HALTON REGION 2019 PROPOSED RNHS
 - PROPOSED RNHS (2020) [SOURCE: APPROVED OR REGISTERED DRAFT PLANS]
 - PROPOSED RNHS (2020) [SOURCE: APPROVED EIR/FSS]
 - SWM POND PERMITTED IN NHS AS PER OPA 272 AND OMB MINUTES OF SETTLEMENT
 - RNHS REMOVAL
 - RNHS ADDITION

NOTE:
DELINEATION OF THE NORTH OAKVILLE HERITAGE SYSTEM IS BASED ON DIRECTION FROM THE TOWN OF OAKVILLE OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 272, THE NORTH OAKVILLE CREEK SUBWATERSHED STUDY, NUMEROUS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT/FUNCTIONAL SERVICE PLANS, ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD MINUTES OF SETTLEMENT AND AGENCY SITE VISITS. INFRASTRUCTURE IS PERMITTED IN THE NHS AS OUTLINED IN THESE DOCUMENTS INCLUDING ROADS, SERVICING, GRADING, SELECT SWM FACILITIES AND TRAILS.

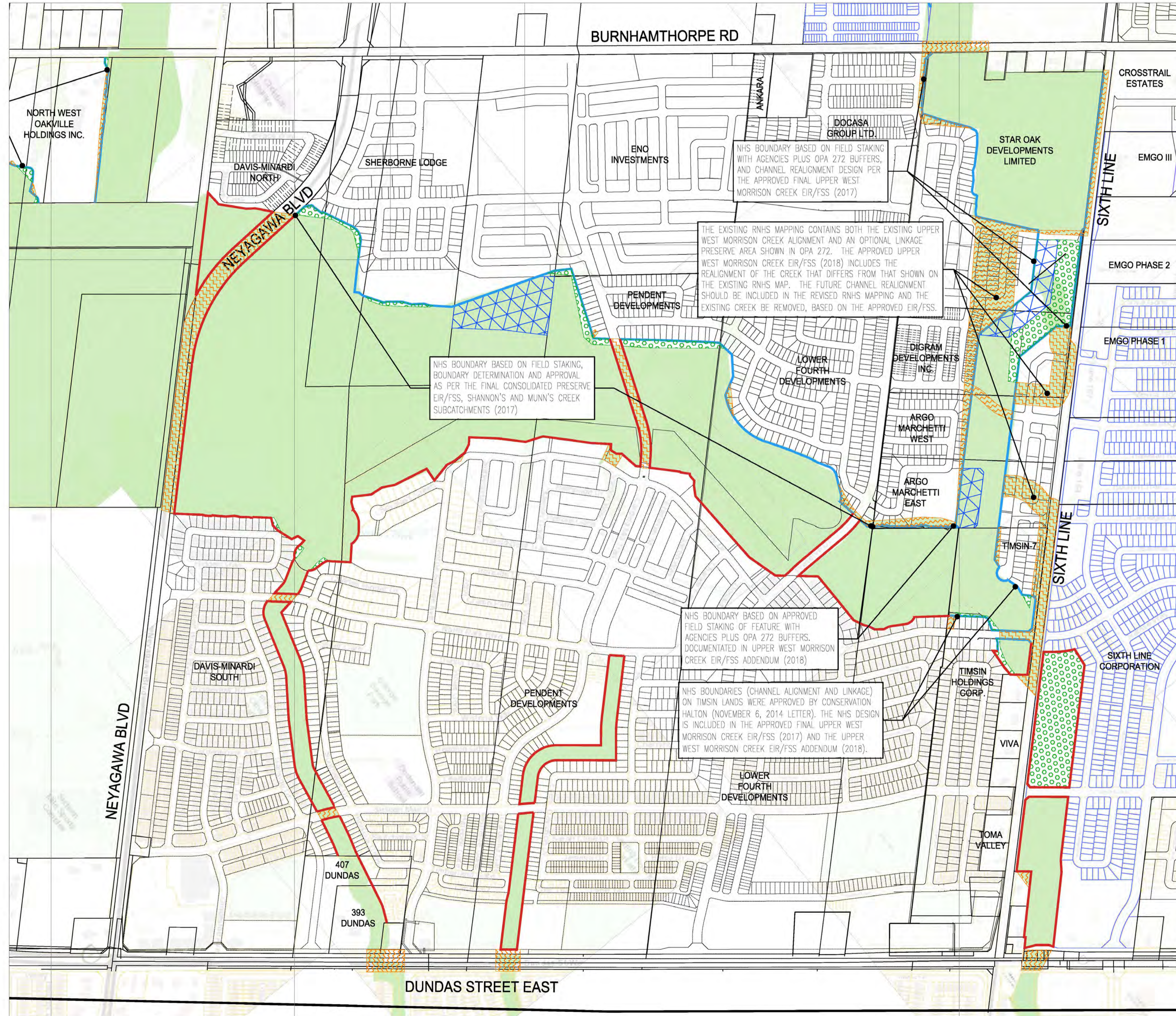
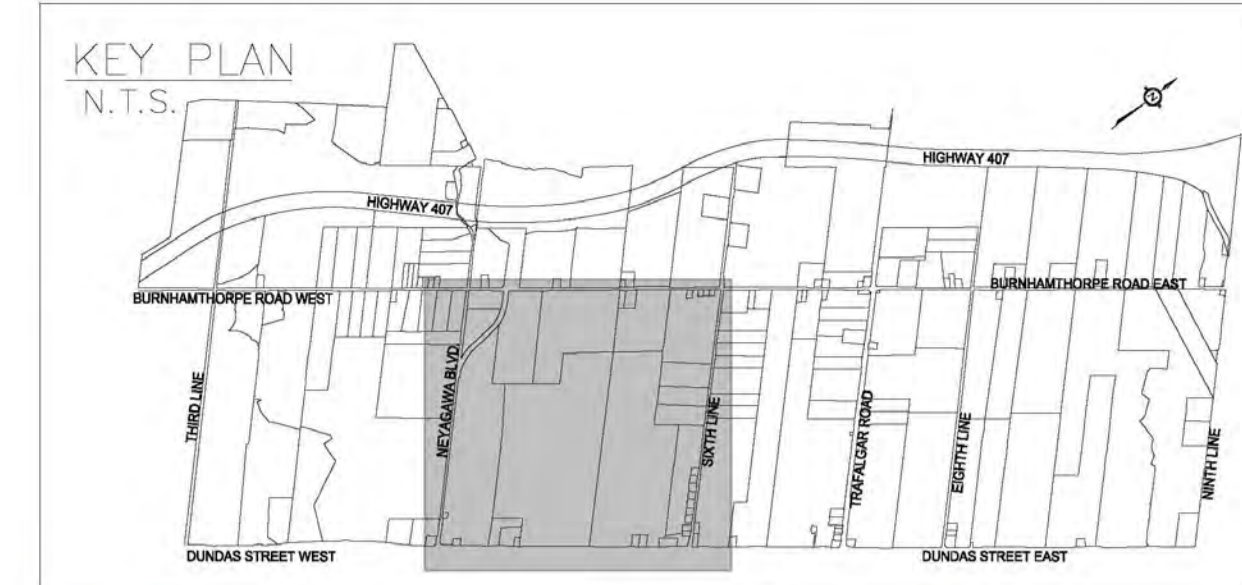
A	ISSUED FOR SUBMISSION	JL	NIA	2020.10.30
	Issued	By	Appd	YYYY.MM.DD
	File Name: NOCLRNHS_REVIEW_OCTOBER-2020	JML		2020.10.30
		Dwn.	Dsgn.	Chkd.
				YYYY.MM.DD

Client/Project
NORTH OAKVILLE COMMUNITY BUILDERS INC.

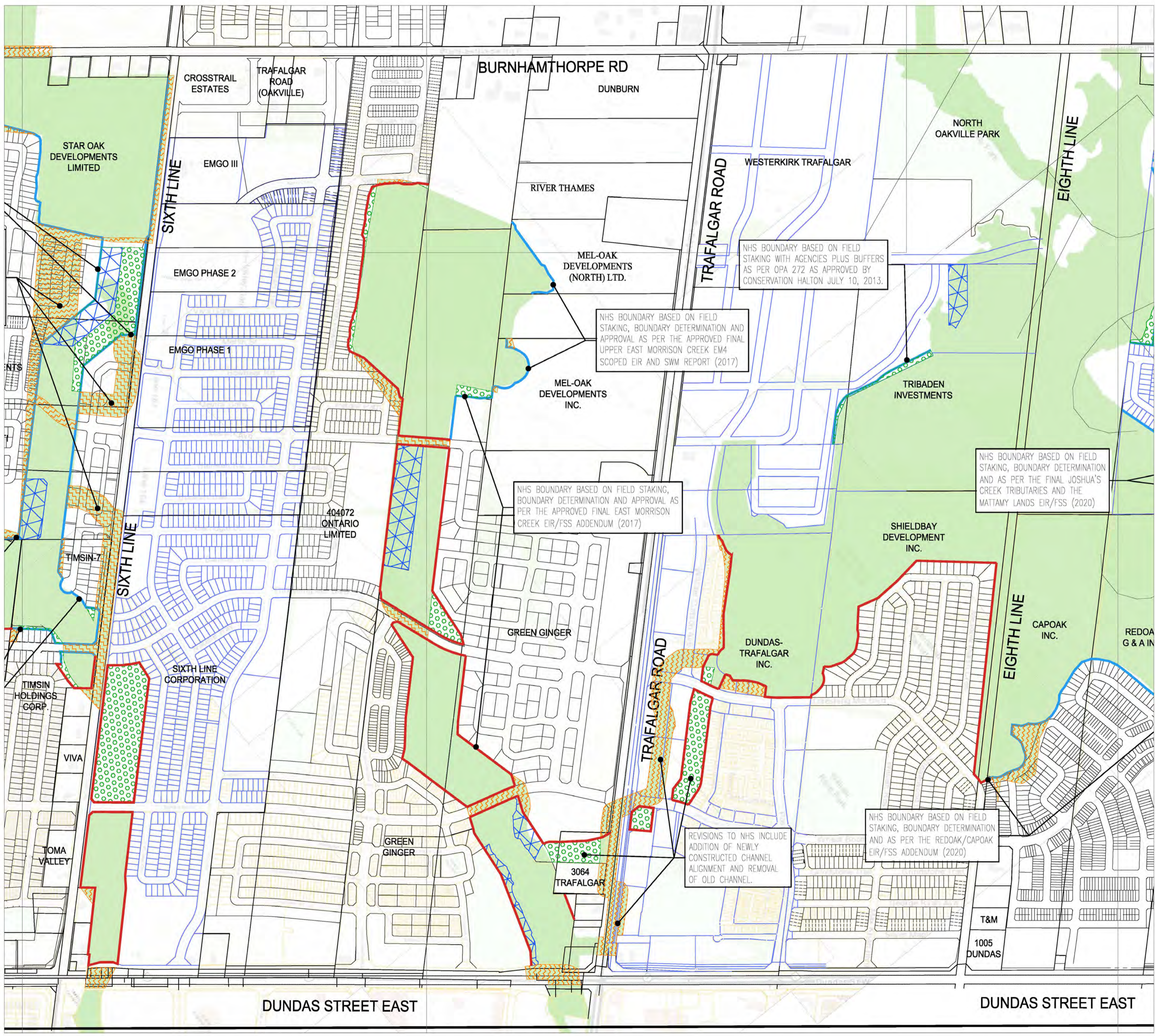
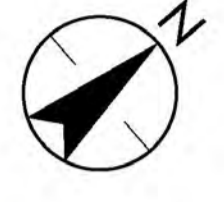
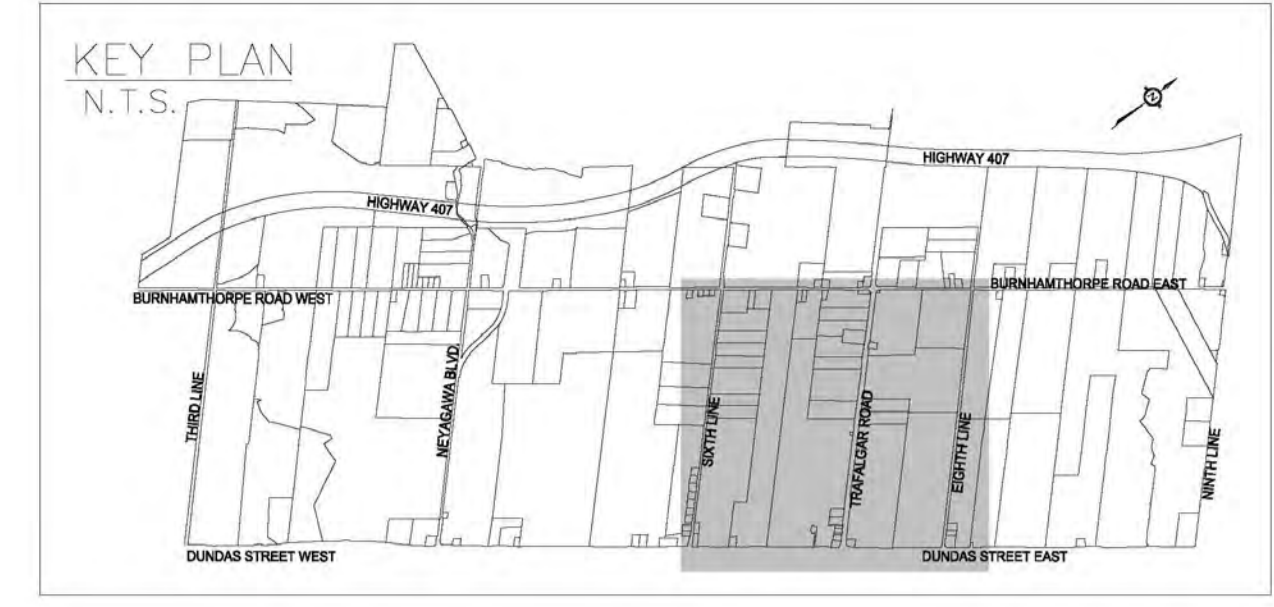
HALTON REGION NHS
MAPPING REVIEW
Oakville, ON

Title
PROPOSED RNHS REVISIONS
NEYAGAWA BLVD - SIXTH LINE
DUNDAS ST - BURNHAMTHORPE RD

Project No.	160621922	Scale	0 50 150 250m
Revision	Sheet	Drawing No.	
0	of	2	



v:\01088\01088\160621922\drawing\propriet\m\wood_rpt_nhs_review_october_2020.dwg 2020.10.30 12:42:48 PM



- LEGEND**
- HALTON REGION 2019 PROPOSED RNHS
 - PROPOSED RNHS (2020)
[SOURCE: APPROVED OR REGISTERED DRAFT PLANS]
 - PROPOSED RNHS (2020)
[SOURCE: APPROVED EIR/FSS]
 - SWM POND PERMITTED IN NHS AS PER OPA 272 AND OMB MINUTES OF SETTLEMENT
 - RNHS REMOVAL
 - RNHS ADDITION

NOTE:
DELINEATION OF THE NORTH OAKVILLE HERITAGE SYSTEM IS BASED ON DIRECTION FROM THE TOWN OF OAKVILLE OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 272, THE NORTH OAKVILLE CREEK SUBWATERSHED STUDY, NUMEROUS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT/FUNCTIONAL SERVICING PLANS, ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD MINUTES OF SETTLEMENT AND AGENCY SITE VISITS. INFRASTRUCTURE IS PERMITTED IN THE NHS AS OUTLINED IN THESE DOCUMENTS INCLUDING ROADS, SERVICING, GRADING, SELECT SWM FACILITIES AND TRAILS.

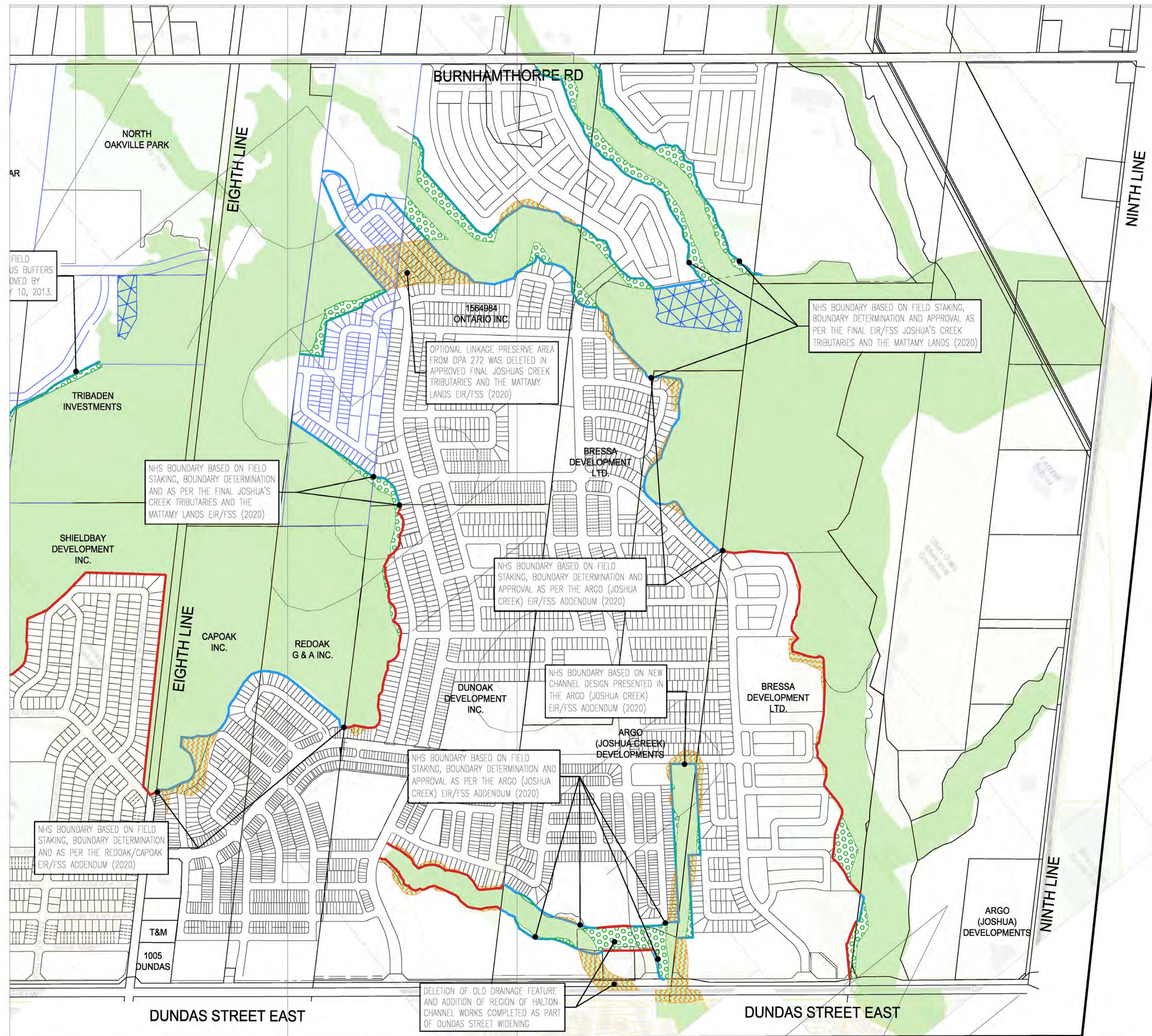
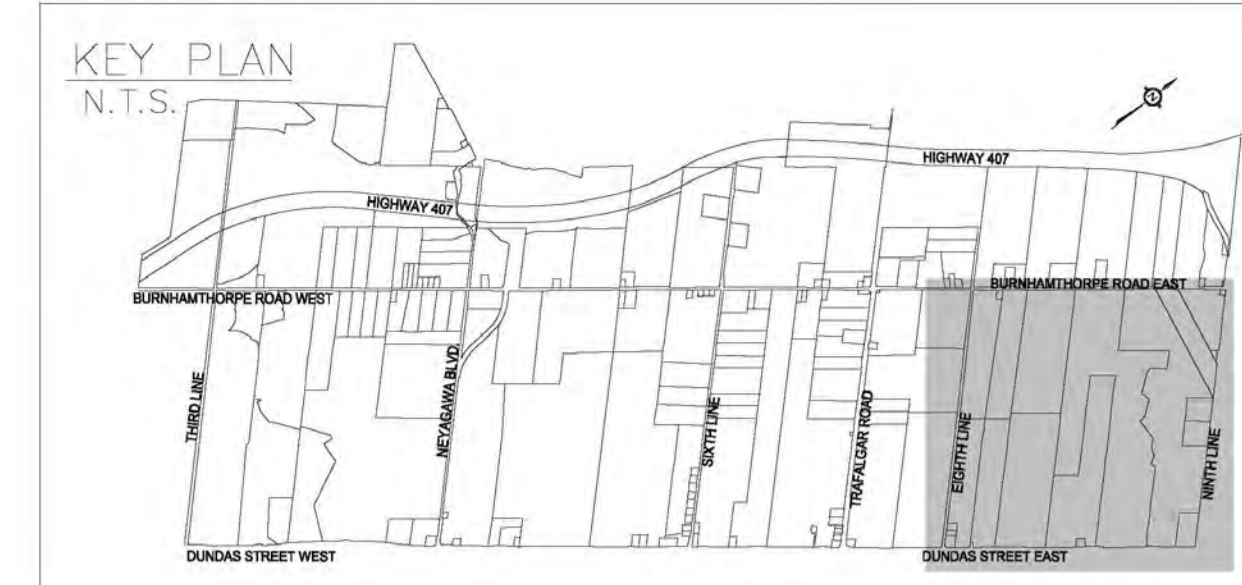
ISSUED FOR SUBMISSION	JL	NM	2020.10.30
Issued	By	Appd	YYYY.MM.DD
File Name: NOCBLRNHS_REVIEW_OCTOBER-2020	JML		2020.10.30
	Dwn.	Dsgn.	Chkd.
			YYYY.MM.DD

Client/Project
NORTH OAKVILLE COMMUNITY BUILDERS INC.

HALTON REGION NHS
MAPPING REVIEW
Oakville, ON

Title
PROPOSED RNHS REVISIONS
SIXTH LINE - EIGHTH LINE
DUNDAS ST - BURNHAMTHORPE RD

Project No. 160621922	Scale 1:5000	
Revision Sheet 0 of	Drawing No. 3	



LEGEND

- HALTON REGION 2019 PROPOSED RNHS
- PROPOSED RNHS (2020)
[SOURCE: APPROVED OR REGISTERED DRAFT PLANS]
- PROPOSED RNHS (2020)
[SOURCE: APPROVED EIR/FSS]
- SWM POND PERMITTED IN NHS AS PER OPA 272 AND OMB MINUTES OF SETTLEMENT
- RNHS REMOVAL
- RNHS ADDITION

NOTE:
DELINEATION OF THE NORTH OAKVILLE HERITAGE SYSTEM IS BASED ON DIRECTION FROM THE TOWN OF OAKVILLE OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 272, THE NORTH OAKVILLE CREEK SUBWATERSHED STUDY, NUMEROUS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT/FUNCTIONAL SERVICING PLANS, ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD MINUTES OF SETTLEMENT AND AGENCY SITE VISITS. INFRASTRUCTURE IS PERMITTED IN THE NHS AS OUTLINED IN THESE DOCUMENTS INCLUDING ROADS, SERVICING, GRADING, SELECT SWM FACILITIES AND TRAILS.

ISSUED FOR SUBMISSION	JL	NMA	2020.10.30
Issued	By	Appd	YYYY.MM.DD
File Name: NOCBLRNHS_REVIEW_OCTOBER-2020	JML	---	2020.10.30
	Dwn.	Dsgn.	Chkd.
			YYYY.MM.DD

Client/Project
NORTH OAKVILLE COMMUNITY BUILDERS INC.

HALTON REGION NHS
MAPPING REVIEW
Oakville, ON

Title
PROPOSED RNHS REVISIONS
EIGHTH LINE - NINTH LINE
DUNDAS ST - BURNHAMTHORPE RD

Project No.	Scale	0	50	150	250m
160621922	1:5000				
Revision	Sheet	Drawing No.			
0	of	4			

v:\01008\008\160621922\drawing\report\m\wood_rpt_nrhms_revison_october_2020.dwg 2020.10.30 12:42:18 PM

Copyright Reserved

The Contractor shall verify and be responsible for all dimensions. DO NOT scale the drawing - any errors or omissions shall be reported to Stantec without delay.
The Copyrights to all designs and drawings are the property of Stantec. Reproduction or use for any purpose other than that authorized by Stantec is forbidden.

Consultant



STONYBROOK CONSULTING INC.

LEGEND

- HALTON REGION 2019 PROPOSED RNHS
- PROPOSED RNHS (2020)
[SOURCE: APPROVED OR REGISTERED DRAFT PLANS]
- PROPOSED RNHS (2020)
[SOURCE: APPROVED EIR/FSS]
- SWM POND PERMITTED IN NHS AS PER OPA 272 AND OMB MINUTES OF SETTLEMENT
- RNHS REMOVAL
- RNHS ADDITION

NOTE:
DELINEATION OF THE NORTH OAKVILLE HERITAGE SYSTEM IS BASED ON DIRECTION FROM THE TOWN OF OAKVILLE OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 272, THE NORTH OAKVILLE CREEK SUBWATERSHED STUDY, NUMEROUS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT/FUNCTIONAL SERVICING PLANS, ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD MINUTES OF SETTLEMENT AND AGENCY SITE VISITS. INFRASTRUCTURE IS PERMITTED IN THE NHS AS OUTLINED IN THESE DOCUMENTS INCLUDING ROADS, SERVICING, GRADING, SELECT SWM FACILITIES AND TRAILS.

A	ISSUED FOR SUBMISSION	JL	NM	2020.10.30
	Issued	By	Appd	YYYY.MM.DD
	File Name: NOCBLRNHS_REVIEW_OCTOBER-2020	JML		2020.10.30
		Dwn.	Dsgn.	Chkd.
				YYYY.MM.DD



NHS BOUNDARY REFLECTS FEATURE STAKING WITH AGENCIES AND BUFFERS AS PER OPA 272. NHS BOUNDARY APPROVED BY CONSERVATION HALTON ON AUGUST 29, 2012.

NHS BOUNDARY BASED ON FIELD STAKING WITH AGENCIES PLUS OPA 272 BUFFERS, AND CHANNEL REALIGNMENT DESIGN PER THE APPROVED FINAL UPPER WEST MORRISON CREEK EIR/FSS (2017)

Client/Project
NORTH OAKVILLE COMMUNITY BUILDERS INC.

HALTON REGION NHS
MAPPING REVIEW
Oakville, ON

Title
PROPOSED RNHS REVISIONS
SIXTH LINE - TRAFALGAR RD
BURNHAMTHORPE RD - HWY 407

Project No.	160621922	Scale	0 50 150 250m 1:5000
Revision	0	Sheet	6
		Drawing No.	



September 17, 2020

Lukas Reale, BURPI
Senior Project Coordinator
DELTA URBAN INC.
8800 Dufferin Street, Suite 104
Vaughan, ON
L4K 0C5

Dear Mr. Reale:

RE: Response to Halton Region Urban Structure Discussion Paper

You have asked urbanMetrics to provide commentary with regards to the Urban Structure Discussion paper released in June, 2020 as part of the Halton Region Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS). In addition, we have also provided commentary on how the recent amendment to the Growth Plan finalized in August will impact the IGMS and the direction of the Urban Structure Discussion Paper.

Changes to the Growth Plan

After proposing a number of changes to the Provincial Growth Plan in June and subsequently receiving public feedback, the Province announced the finalized version of the Amendment on August 28, 2020. Among the changes that will go into effect, several have direct implications on Halton's IGMS, including:

- **Extending the Planning Horizon to 2051.** The work to date including the Region's Growth Scenarios report was based on projections only to 2041 as per the 2019 Growth Plan in effect at the time. The added time frame means that the Region will have to plan to accommodate more population and employment than it had previously considered.
- **Flexibility to Increase the Growth Plan Population and Employment Targets.** The IGMS Scenarios Report prepared growth scenarios based on a fixed population. The amended Growth Plan now considers the population and employment forecasts as "minimums" rather

than “targets”, which can be increased by the Region through a municipal comprehensive review.

- **Updated Population and Employment Projections.** Schedule 3 of the Growth Plan now only includes population and employment forecasts to 2051. The IGMS work was based on the previous projections for 2031 and 2041 from the 2019 Growth Plan.
- **Updated Market Based Land Needs Methodology** – The methodology used in the IGMS work tended to reflect desired policy outcomes with minimal emphasis on market demand and supply parameters, which is a required component of the updated methodology.

These changes should be significant enough to cause the Region to reconsider some of its previous IGMS work, particularly the Growth Scenarios prepared prior to the recent Amendment to the Growth Plan.

Questions Posed by the IGMS Structure Report

The IGMS Structure Report poses some 15 questions to be addressed during the IGMS process. Some of the most relevant to the North Oakville Landowners include:

Discussion Question 6: Building on the 2041 Preliminary Recommended Network from the Define Major Transit Requirements, should corridors be identified as Strategic Growth Areas in the Regional Official Plan? If so, should a specific minimum density target be assigned to them?

North Oakville is centred on Higher Order Transit Corridors along Trafalgar Road and Dundas Street. Additional corridors are identified along Highway 407, Highway 427 and Bronte Road. Trafalgar Road and Dundas Street are planned to have bus only lanes and priority transit signalization. The intersection of Trafalgar Road and Dundas Street is designated as a Regional Transit Node.

However, North Oakville does not contain any Mobility Hubs or Major Transit Stations, which are the highest priority intensification nodes with the highest density targets as per the Growth Plan. Nor does it contain a Higher Order Transit Corridor as defined in the Growth Plan.

In the Oakville Official Plan, the Trafalgar Road and Dundas Street corridors are designated as Urban Core Areas. In addition, is the Neyagawa Core Area, which is also designated as an Urban Core Area in the Official Plan. These Core Areas are intended to support the highest densities in North Oakville. While the Oakville Official Plan contains site specific densities, neither the Oakville Official Plan nor the Regional Official Plan currently provides for overall density targets throughout these corridors. We would note that the draft OPA 321 to the Oakville Official Plan originally proposed specific transit supportive densities along the Dundas and Trafalgar Urban Core Areas. The Region ultimately

removed these densities from the amendment and with respect to the Trafalgar Urban Core included the statement:

A minimum planned density for the Trafalgar Urban Core shall be established through the Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review, in conformity with the Growth Plan (OPA 321 Section 7.6.4.8 c)).

It is, however, acknowledged in the Structure report that North Oakville is on track to achieve an overall density of more than 60 persons and jobs per hectare and overall the existing Designated Greenfield Areas in Halton should collectively achieve this density and certainly exceed the minimum density of 50 residents and jobs per hectare as prescribed in the current Growth Plan¹.

The rationale for assigning density targets to the Dundas or Trafalgar corridors in North Oakville would, therefore, not be to achieve Provincial targets, but rather to achieve other policy goals specific to Halton and/or Oakville.

While after study and consultation, density targets may be considered in the Regional Official Plan along Dundas Street, Trafalgar Road and other corridors in North Oakville, they should only be established after an understanding of (a) how they would impact the ability of higher order intensification areas to achieve their targeted densities; (b) whether there is sufficient market to support additional density along the corridors; (c) how additional density can physically be accommodated within the context of the in-effect North Oakville East Secondary Plan and the land use commitments already made by the landowners; and, (d) whether additional areas of unplanned residential growth such as Palermo Node and the Research Innovation Lands adjacent to the hospital be should be allocated population in accordance with current and future commitments.

Discussion Question 7: Should the Regional Official Plan identify additional multi-purpose and minor arterial roads in the Regional Urban Structure, not for the purposes of directing growth, but to support a higher order Regional transit network

According to the Structure report, multi-purpose and Minor Arterial roads in the Region have the potential to be considered as part of the Regional Urban Structure as a focus for growth and intensification (depending on the urban context) or for long term protection to support a high-frequency transit function.

¹ Structure Report pp. 75-76. Note that the current version of the Growth Plan maintains the greenfield density of 50 persons and jobs per hectare.

Whether multi-purpose and/or Minor Arterial Roads should be so considered for additional growth is a question that would depend on the densities required to support higher order Regional transit in a particular area.

Apart from this, the questions noted above would still need to be addressed to ensure that the market exists to accommodate increased densities along multi-purpose and minor arterial roads in the context of the overall plan; that it would not detract from the ability of higher priority intensification areas from achieving their required densities; and that there were no physical or other limitations to achieving additional densities along these routes. In addition, some of these Minor Arterial Roads bisect planned low-rise neighbourhoods. The impact of adding additional density including traffic, parking and demand for other soft services (eg., schools and parks etc) needs to be appropriately assessed against compatibility and other stable neighbourhood planning principles.

We would also note that in OPA 321, the Town removed singles, semi-detached and duplex units from its definition of “Medium Density” development. Incorporating additional Medium Density development along Minor Arterial and multi-purpose roads would further constrain opportunities for these housing types, which are important in terms of accommodating housing choice and diversity.

Discussion Question 14: Are there other factors, besides those required by the Growth Plan, Regional Official Plan or the Integrated Growth Management Strategy Evaluation Framework that Halton Region should consider when evaluating the appropriate location for potential Settlement Area expansions?

As discussed above, the Growth Plan and the recent changes to it require that market trends be examined as part of the growth management exercise. To a large extent, the proposed scenarios and the Region’s Assessment Criteria shown on Figure 25 of the Structure Report to be used to evaluate the need for a Settlement Boundary expansion and where it should occur omits any aspect of market consideration. The criteria are focused entirely on desired policy outcomes and not on whether a growth strategy could be supported by market trends or what the potential adverse impacts would be on the regional economy, consumer residential housing decisions and housing affordability of adjusting the housing mix and supply in the Region.

The current version of the Growth Plan requires that the “The GGH will have sufficient housing supply that reflects market demand and what is needed in local communities” and also indicates that “It is important to optimize the use of the existing urban land supply as well as the existing building and housing stock to avoid over-designating land for future urban development while also providing flexibility for local decision-makers to respond to housing need and market demand”.

The Amendment to the Growth Plan also requires that municipalities use a revised methodology to determine their land needs:

Recognizing that local needs are diverse, the proposed new Methodology aims to provide the key factors to be considered as municipalities plan to ensure that a sufficient and appropriate mix of land is available to: accommodate all housing market segments; avoid housing shortages; consider market demand; accommodate all employment types, including those that are evolving; and plan for all infrastructure services that are needed to meet complete communities objectives to the horizon of the Plan...

The proposed Methodology will provide more flexibility to municipalities. It will also be forward-looking and account for demographics, employment trends, market demand, and concerns related to housing affordability in the Greater Golden Horseshoe².

In our opinion, the proposed changes to the Growth Plan reinforce the need of municipalities to consider market demand in their application of the population and employment forecasts and in the preparation of municipal comprehensive reviews. While the Halton Growth Scenario's work does contain a number of paragraphs addressing market conditions, the Assessment criteria shown in Figure 25 of the Structure Report used to determine where expansion should occur contains no mention of market as a factor.

The Scenarios report also acknowledges that the IGMS work is seeking to manipulate historic market trends rather than planning to accommodate them within the broader policy context:

Planning for the GGH, including Halton, seeks to profoundly change these historical patterns, by introducing far more apartments into the broader housing market as well as within local market areas, including Halton. This planned shift in the range and mix of housing underlies much of the IGMS work and long-term growth planning in Halton³.

Very little discussion is contained in the IGMS work with regards to the economic impact of this market manipulation and the need to plan for complete communities that reflect the appropriate balance of housing types. Planning for a mix and range of housing forms in a variety of location to satisfy all facets of consumer choice and preference is a tenant of good public policy making and a requirement of all relevant and applicable legislation and planning policy. This has been reinforced in the August Growth Plan amendment which requires consideration of market demand. Essentially, in the statement above the Region through aspirational policy statement is ignoring the need to plan in the short and long term for housing and neighbourhoods that are both resilient and complete. Arguably, the Region's proposition is

² Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) Number – 019-1679.

³ IGMS Scenarios report p. 27.

that traditional housing forms for families are less of a priority than other housing forms that cater to other segments of the community and market place.

Of particular concern, is the potential to over-designate lands for apartment development, which is inherent in policies related to infill development, Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas, Intensification Corridors, as well as, propositions in the Structure Report for minimum density targets along Corridors and to direct growth to multi-purpose and minor arterial roads. While the Growth Plan does contain specific density and intensification targets which must be met, the 2020 Growth Plan policies also require a balanced approach to the housing mix with a consideration of market needs to avoid overbuilding a particular housing type.

It is important to recognize that there seems to be a common misconception that apartment units are universally more affordable than ground related housing. This, however, is only true when apartments are constructed at sizes much smaller than ground related units. This is because the cost to construct an apartment unit with surface parking is about 60% to 70% more on a square foot basis than a townhome or single detached house and the construction cost of an apartment with underground parking is approximately double the cost per square foot of a ground related unit. These cost differentials are directly reflected in the purchase prices of apartments and ground related units. Based on research conducted by urbanMetrics in November 2019, a new three-bedroom apartment in Oakville's Uptown Core of approximately 1,000 square feet was selling for an average of approximately \$940,000, compared to about \$800,000 for a much larger 1,800 square foot new townhome in a greenfield site in Milton.

While apartment units may be a more affordable option for singles and couples for whom smaller housing space is manageable, apartments become decidedly less affordable for families with greater space needs.

Key questions that need to be addressed in the IGMS work are:

- To what extent does excessive apartment approvals limit the options available to home buyers, further reducing the affordability of ground related units and causing increased movement to the fringes of the urban area?
- Are large amounts of high-rise apartment development a feasible alternative for ground related housing in suburban locations such as North Oakville?
- What is the most appropriate balance between apartment development and ground related housing, recognizing both the policy goals of intensification and the economic impacts of constraining the supply of ground related housing?
- How can market analysis best be accommodated within the IGMS framework going forward?

- And finally, how is the Region's Allocation Program going to be considered. Will a policy skewed towards apartments be economically viable for the City and Region if the market for apartments does not materialise when municipal services are required for the balance of new growth.

Furthermore, the long-term implications of COVID-19 on daily working and living patterns need to be more fully assessed as part of the IGMS work. For example, COVID-19 has demonstrated that working from home is a viable option for a large portion of the office-based work force. To what extent will this workforce return to the previous 9-5, five-day a week pre-COVID model? And to what extent will families be willing to trade commuting time for larger home spaces from which to work, raise their children and undertake other household activities. While there is still a lot that is unknown with regards to the post-COVID world, it is not sufficient to simply assume that patterns of urbanisation will return to normal.

Discussion Question 15: What factors are important for the Region to consider in setting a minimum Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) density target for Halton Region as whole, and for each of the Local Municipalities? Should the Region use a higher minimum Designated Greenfield Area density target than the 50 residents and jobs per hectare target in the Growth Plan?

As noted above, North Oakville specifically and Halton Region as a whole, will likely already exceed the Greenfield Area density of 50 residents and jobs per hectare as mandated in the Growth Plan and will also likely exceed 60 persons and jobs per hectare. If the Region chooses to plan to exceed the provincially mandated target or apply distinct density targets to individual municipalities, it will be for local reasons and not to achieve the Provincial targets.

In our opinion, the criteria outlined on Figure 25 of the Structure report provide a good policy lens from which to assess where and how the Region should grow. However, the Growth Plan still requires that a market lens be applied to arrive at an ultimate decision. For example, the four scenarios under consideration in the Scenarios report provide for very different housing options which would appeal to different markets. The principal trade-offs between the four options relate to how many units to develop in new Greenfield Areas (mostly ground related); to be added to the existing Greenfield Areas (apartments); and to be developed within the Built Boundary (mostly apartments). A family that may be seeking a ground related unit in a new Greenfield Area in Milton would have a completely different set of housing needs than a person or family that may choose to live in an apartment along the Trafalgar Road Corridor or the Oakville Midtown Core. Without an understanding of the housing market, it would not be possible to arrive at a realistic allocation between very different areas and unit types.

For this reason, we would strongly recommend that in assessing density targets and unit allocations, that the Region undertake a market analysis to inform its decisions.

Conclusions

In summary, the changes to the Growth Plan should require the Region to reconsider the Scenarios it originally proposed in its Scenarios report, as they no longer reflect the changes to the Growth Plan and the revised population and employment forecasts. It is also essential that the Region adopt a market focused methodology to determining its land needs and allocating future development to its area municipalities.

It was a pleasure to conduct this review on your behalf. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours truly,

urbanMetrics inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rowan Faludi." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Rowan Faludi, MCIP, RPP, CMC, PLE

Partner

rfaludi@urbanMetrics.ca