

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **February 9 Council Workshop**

#### **Regional Official Plan Review: Draft Preferred Growth Concept**

##### **Executive Summary**

- The current, approved Regional Official Plan provides comprehensive planning for growth and development to 2031. All upper- and single-tier municipalities that are subject to 'A Place to Grow: The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019', prepared under the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, must plan to accommodate population and employment growth projected to 2051. For Halton Region this represents an additional 332,000 people and 150,000 jobs by 2051.
- The purpose of this document is to describe, for Regional Council's information, Regional staff's draft recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept that has resulted from the Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS) component of the Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR).
- To help frame the draft recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept within the ROPR, this document summarizes the IGMS process to date, including its key milestones and the important role of public consultation and stakeholder feedback.
- This document builds on the background information on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept shared at the November 17, 2021 Council Workshop. It presents additional and updated information and technical analysis and responds to questions and requests for clarification on the draft recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept that would form Halton's approach to accommodating population, housing, and employment growth to the 2051 planning horizon.
- Attachment #1 to this information package contains the Draft 'IGMS – Preferred Growth Concept (PGC) Report', which contains a strategy for accommodating growth in Halton supported by the findings of a set of technical studies related to land needs, Regional infrastructure and financial considerations, climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, and impacts to agriculture, natural heritage, and water resources.
- It is Regional staff's position that the draft recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept reflects the Planning Vision of the Regional Official Plan founded in the concept of sustainable development, incorporates the plans and priorities of the Local Municipalities to the extent possible, responds to the Climate Change emergency through growth management that mitigates climate change impacts, and reinforces the Regional Urban Structure while protecting the Agricultural System and Natural Heritage System by minimizing urban boundary expansion.

- The major elements of the approach to accommodating growth to 2051 as discussed in this document and the Draft PGC Report include:
  - implementing a compact and transit-supportive Regional Urban Structure by directing significant population and employment growth to strategic growth areas, including around GO Stations and planned higher order transit corridors;
  - accommodating more than 80 per cent of population growth (contained in more than 85 per cent of new housing units) and almost 80 per cent of employment growth between 2031 and 2051 within the Region's existing urban areas;
  - a significant shift in the future housing mix of the Region towards apartments, from approximately 25 per cent to more than 50 per cent of total housing units, directed to strategic growth areas, between 2031 and 2051;
  - a measured urban boundary expansion of 1,120 ha of new community land in Milton and Halton Hills, for residential, commercial and institutional uses, to provide a market-based supply of ground-related housing as directed by the Province, and accommodate important community uses (i.e. hospitals, parks);
  - a major shift in the future employment mix of the Region towards mixed use office employment, directed to strategic growth areas, between 2031 and 2051;
  - a measured urban boundary expansion of 1,070 ha of new employment land in Milton and Halton Hills, to accommodate market demand for advanced manufacturing, logistics/warehousing, and supportive uses, which require access to 400-series highways.
- Following the November 17, 2021 Council Workshop, Local Municipal Councils received reports and provided their feedback on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept. In addition, there has been significant discussion and feedback from the public, including e-mails sent to members of Regional and Local Councils expressing concerns with the Draft Preferred Growth Concept and specifically expressing concerns with the proposal to expand Halton's existing urban boundaries. This document presents supplemental information related to this issue and clarifies certain elements of the draft recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept.
- As part of the Workshop, staff will also review with Council the draft Policy Directions intended to guide updates to Regional Official Plan policies on climate change, growth management, the rural and agricultural system, natural heritage system, the North Aldershot Planning Area, working with Indigenous Communities and Peoples, and plan implementation, among other things. The draft Policy Directions are discussed further in this document and are provided as Attachment #2.
- No decision will be made by Regional Council at the Workshop Meeting. The consideration of the Preferred Growth Concept will be rescheduled to a future meeting. A recommendation will be brought forward and Regional Council's decision will form the foundation of Halton's Integrated Growth Management Strategy. There is a Provincial requirement for Regional Council to adopt a Regional Official Plan Amendment addressing Growth Plan conformity by July 1, 2022.

## **Background**

The current, approved Regional Official Plan provides comprehensive planning for growth and development to 2031. All upper- and single-tier municipalities subject to 'A Place to Grow: The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019' must plan to accommodate population and employment growth projected to 2051. For Halton Region, this means planning for 1,100,000 people and 500,000 jobs by 2051. The Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS) is the component of the Regional Official Plan Review that is developing a strategy to accommodate this growth to 2051 and achieve conformity with the Growth Plan.

Regional staff's draft recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept, provided for Regional Council's information in this document, is the result of a comprehensive planning process undertaken in response to the Provincial planning framework. The key milestones which have led to this point in the IGMS process as well as the important role of public consultation in informing this work are summarized below.

### *An Overview of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy*

- ***Growth Scenarios & Evaluation Framework***

In 2019 and 2020, Regional Council received information on a set of Growth Scenarios developed to assess a range of approaches to accommodating growth in Halton Region. Regional Council directed staff to refine the Growth Scenarios that reflected the Local Plans and Priorities as the basis for developing a series of more detailed Growth Concepts. Regional Council also received information on an Evaluation Framework developed to inform the assessment of the detailed Growth Concepts. Following additional Local Municipal consultation, Regional Council endorsed the Evaluation Framework for use in the IGMS process in May 2020.

The Growth Scenarios and the Evaluation Framework as endorsed by Regional Council set a strong foundation for the IGMS, highlighting the importance of advancing local plans and priorities as well as identifying the objectives and measures viewed as important in evaluating options for how Halton grows.

- ***Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper & ROPA No. 48***

Recognizing the importance of directing growth to key locations within the Region's existing urban areas, implementing the requirements of the Provincial Growth Plan, and supporting Local Municipal Plans and Priorities, a Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper was presented to Regional Council in July 2020 through Report No. LPS56-20 re: 'Regional Official Plan Review – Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper'. This was presented alongside Discussion Papers for other theme areas being addressed as part of the ROPR.

The Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper and the feedback that was received from Local Municipalities, agencies, and the public identified strong support for identifying key areas in Halton Region where higher-density, transit-supportive growth

could be directed, namely to areas around GO Transit Stations and existing or planned transit corridors. Through Report No. LPS84-20 re: 'Advancing Key Planning Priorities of the Halton Municipalities' in September 2020, Regional Council directed staff to develop an initial scoped Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) to advance select local municipal planning priorities related to urban structure. This direction resulted in ROPA No. 48 – 'An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure' adopted by Regional Council in July 2021 and approved by the Province in November 2021.

The Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper and ROPA 48 provide a strong foundation for accommodating growth in Halton's Strategic Growth Areas such as Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas, Regional Nodes, and Regional Corridors. The Regional Urban Structure implemented as part of the IGMS forms an integral part of Halton's growth strategy and is planned to accommodate a significant share of the growth planned in Halton to 2051.

- ***Growth Concepts Discussion Paper & Supplemental Information***

Building on the direction from Regional Council in response to the Growth Scenarios and Evaluation Framework, Regional staff prepared a Growth Concepts Discussion Paper, which identified and evaluated different approaches to accommodating growth in Halton to 2051 and evaluated them using the endorsed Evaluation Framework.

The Discussion Paper was presented to Regional Council in February 2021, through Report No. LPS18-21 – 'Regional Official Plan Review - Integrated Growth Management Strategy – Growth Concepts Discussion Paper'. Regional Council authorized the release of the Growth Concepts Discussion Paper for public consultation and directed staff to develop a Draft Preferred Growth Concept based on the input received from the Local Municipalities, public agencies, and the public.

The Growth Concepts Discussion Paper evaluated four ways to accommodate growth to 2051: Concept 1 (Moderate Greenfield Expansion), Concept 2 (Limited Greenfield Expansion), Concept 3 (Employment Area Only Expansion) and Concept 4 (Greatest Greenfield Expansion). These approaches differed based on the amount of growth they directed to Halton's existing urban areas or conversely, the amount of growth they directed to new urban expansion areas.

In April 2021, through Report No. LPS45-21 – 'Additional Information Relating to Growth Concepts and the Integrated Growth Management Strategy', Regional staff provided information on an additional Growth Concept that provides no new urban boundary expansion (referred to as Concept 3B – 'No Greenfield Expansion') and a comparative analysis of greenhouse gas emissions for the Growth Concepts, among other things. By way of motion, Regional Council directed staff to add this information to the public engagement program on the Growth Concepts.

The Growth Concepts, their evaluation in the Discussion Paper, and the additional information provided by Regional staff provided information regarding the distinctions

between the range of approaches to accommodating growth in Halton, enabling valuable input from Local Municipalities, public agencies, and the public.

- ***Key Principles for a Preferred Growth Concept***

In July 2021, Report No. LPS51-21 re: 'Regional Official Plan Review: Work Plan Update and Overview of Key Principles as the Foundation for a Draft Preferred Growth Concept', provided Regional Council with an update on the IGMS, a summary of public input on the Growth Concepts and supplemental information, and a revised work plan.

The report highlighted how the Growth Concepts Discussion Paper provided a basis for developing a Preferred Growth Concept through its technical assessment and evaluation of matters related to growth management, infrastructure, fiscal impacts, agriculture, mineral aggregate resources, climate change, natural heritage systems and healthy watersheds, and multi-modal transportation, transit-supportive densities and goods movement. It also provided information on the Provincial Land Needs Assessment methodology and how this would inform a Preferred Growth Concept. Building on these considerations and the extensive input received on the Discussion Paper and throughout the IGMS process to that point in time, the report identified the following Key Principles to be used as the foundation for developing a balanced approach to accommodating growth to 2051:

- Confirming and Supporting a Regional Urban Structure
- Setting an Ambitious and Achievable Intensification Target
- Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change
- Establishing a Broad Range and Mix of Housing
- Providing a Complete Spectrum of Employment Opportunities
- Advancing Strategic Employment Land Conversions
- Setting Bold yet Achievable Community Area & Employment Area Density Targets
- Maintaining Strong Development Phasing Policies
- Ensuring Growth Proceeds without negative Fiscal Impacts
- Maximizing Agricultural Land Protection
- Further Enhancing the Natural Heritage System

In discussing these Key Principles, the report noted that a Preferred Growth Concept was to be based on a significant shift to more compact, mixed use urban form, meeting the challenge of climate change and maximizing the protection of our agricultural land base while also representing an achievable plan, taking into consideration the housing market, choice and affordability, and the financing and construction of infrastructure to service growth.

- ***Draft Preferred Growth Concept***

In November 2021, a Council Workshop was held to provide Regional Council and the public with information on a Draft Preferred Growth Concept prepared by Regional

staff based on the Key Principles discussed above. This included an overview of the Growth Concepts that had been evaluated, a summary of the public engagement process and the feedback received, and specific responses to input received from Advisory Committees and Local Municipalities. It also provided an overview of the Draft Preferred Growth Concept and its supporting Draft Land Needs Assessment.

Since the November 2021 Council Workshop, technical work on the Integrated Growth Management Strategy has been updated, alongside ongoing consultation with Local Municipal staff in support of developing the Preferred Growth Concept as presented in this document for Regional Council's information.

Local Municipal Councils have received reports and provided their perspectives on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept and there has also been significant discussion and feedback from the public, including e-mails sent to members of Regional and Local Councils expressing concerns with the proposed direction to expand Halton's existing urban boundaries. This information has been reviewed by Regional staff and is addressed later in this document.

### *Consultation and the Integrated Growth Management Strategy*

An extensive public engagement program has supported the IGMS process described above, providing the public many opportunities to make their views known on how Halton should grow. Throughout the process, detailed information has been posted on **halton.ca** and has received a significant number of webpage views. The same materials were available for pick-up at community centres and libraries across Halton.

Virtual Public Information Centres (PICs) were held in 2020 to consult in the ROPR Discussion Papers, including those related to the IGMS. To consult on the Growth Concepts, six virtual PICs were held in 2021 and were well attended. Small group discussions and real time polling allowed participants to express their views. An online questionnaire on the Growth Concepts received many responses, allowing respondents to identify which Concept they supported and why. Regional staff also made themselves available to meet with residents and community groups through individual or small group 'Talk to a Planner' discussions. In addition, a series of meetings were held with Regional Advisory and Liaison Committees as well as Local Municipal staff.

Through the consultation process, public and stakeholder groups showed strong interest in the future growth of Halton Region. Those who participated in the PICs, filled out the online questionnaire, or submitted written comments in response to the Growth Concepts Discussion Paper provided extensive, thoughtful, constructive comments.

The results of the online questionnaire and polling at the PICs indicated the strongest support for Concept 3B (No Greenfield Expansion) or Concept 3A (Employment Area Only Expansion). Supporters of Concept 3B felt the concept was the best for protecting agricultural land and green space, responding to the climate emergency and supporting

intensification, densification and creating communities that allow people to live with a full range of amenities. Following Concepts 3A and 3B, Concept 4 (Greatest Greenfield Expansion) received the next most support, although noticeably less support than for Concepts 3A or 3B. Supporters of Concept 4 felt it was more balanced in providing a broader range of housing and employment options.

It has been reiterated throughout the IGMS process that it was not the intent to select one of the Growth Concepts as the Preferred Growth Concept, but rather to take the best elements from the Growth Concepts to develop a Preferred Growth Concept.

Regional staff have documented and considered all input received, whether through a formal submission or comments in an email or at a meeting. This includes a summary of public engagement on the Growth Concepts (provided as Attachment #3), responses to comments from Regional Advisory Committees (provided as Attachment #4), and responses to Local Municipal comments on the Growth Concepts (Attachment #5). In addition, in response to stakeholder submissions on the IGMS received generally since the release of the Growth Concepts Discussion Paper in February 2021, a document indicating how this input was considered in developing a Preferred Growth Concept will be made available to Regional Council through a link provided the week of January 31, 2022 in advance of the Workshop.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this document is to build on the materials provided to Regional Council in November 2021 on a Draft Preferred Growth concept and describe, for Regional Council's information, Regional staff's draft recommendation on a Preferred Growth Concept for accommodating population, housing, and employment growth in Halton to the 2051 planning horizon. This section provides a summary of this Preferred Growth Concept as well as the detailed supporting information and technical analysis presented in the Draft 'Integrated Growth Management Strategy – Preferred Growth Concept Report'. Next, there is a discussion of the feedback received in response to the Draft Preferred Growth Concept, from both Local Municipal Councils and the public. Supplemental information is also provided that responds to many of the questions and requests for clarification raised as part of this feedback. The document concludes with a brief discussion of the next steps in the Regional Official Plan Review and Integrated Growth Management Strategy process.

### *Overview of the Draft Recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept*

In undertaking the review of the Regional Official Plan, Regional Council directed staff to build on the strong foundational vision, goals and policies in the Regional Official Plan. The Planning Vision contained in the Regional Official Plan is based on the concept of sustainable development, moving the Region towards sustainability, and building on the themes of land stewardship and healthy communities. Building on this Planning Vision, the Key Principles set out above have also informed the Preferred Growth Concept. A

description of how each Key Principle relates to elements of the Preferred Growth Concept is addressed in the Draft PGC Report discussed below.

Regional staff's draft recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept represents a balanced approach to accommodating growth in Halton to 2051 in accordance with the Provincial Growth Plan and Land Needs Assessment methodology. The key elements of this Preferred Growth Concept include:

- implementing a compact and transit-supportive Regional Urban Structure by directing significant population and employment growth to strategic growth areas, including around GO Stations and planned higher order transit corridors;
- accommodating more than 80 per cent of population growth (contained in more than 85 per cent of new housing units) and almost 80 per cent of employment growth between 2031 and 2051, within the Region's existing urban areas;
- a significant shift in the future housing mix of the Region towards apartments, from approximately 25 per cent to more than 50 per cent of total housing units, directed to strategic growth areas, between 2031 and 2051;
- a measured urban boundary expansion of 1,120 hectares of new community land in the south and east of Milton (710 hectares) and a southerly expansion of Georgetown in Halton Hills (410 hectares), for residential, commercial and institutional uses, to provide a market-based supply of ground-related housing as directed by the Province, and accommodate important community uses (i.e. hospitals, parks);
- a major shift in the future employment mix of the Region towards mixed use office employment, directed to strategic growth areas, between 2031 and 2051;
- a measured urban boundary expansion of 1,070 hectares of new employment land located primarily along the Highway 401 and 407 corridors in Milton (670 hectares) and Halton Hills (400 hectares), to accommodate market demand for advanced manufacturing, logistics/warehousing, and supportive uses, which require access to 400-series highways.

The approach represented in Regional staff's draft recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept allocates population, housing units and employment to each Local Municipality from 2031 to 2051 as summarized in Tables 1, 2, and 3 below. A map of this Preferred Growth Concept, including key elements of the Regional Urban Structure where growth is being directed and areas identified for new Community Areas and Employment Areas is identified in Figure 1. This figure also identifies the policy areas where population and employment growth is being directed in Halton to 2051 (i.e., the Built-Up Area, the Existing Designated Greenfield Areas, and New Community and Employment Areas).

For ease of reference, a map of Regional staff's draft recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept and a map showing the supported employment conversions are provided as Attachment #6 and #7 to this information package, respectively.

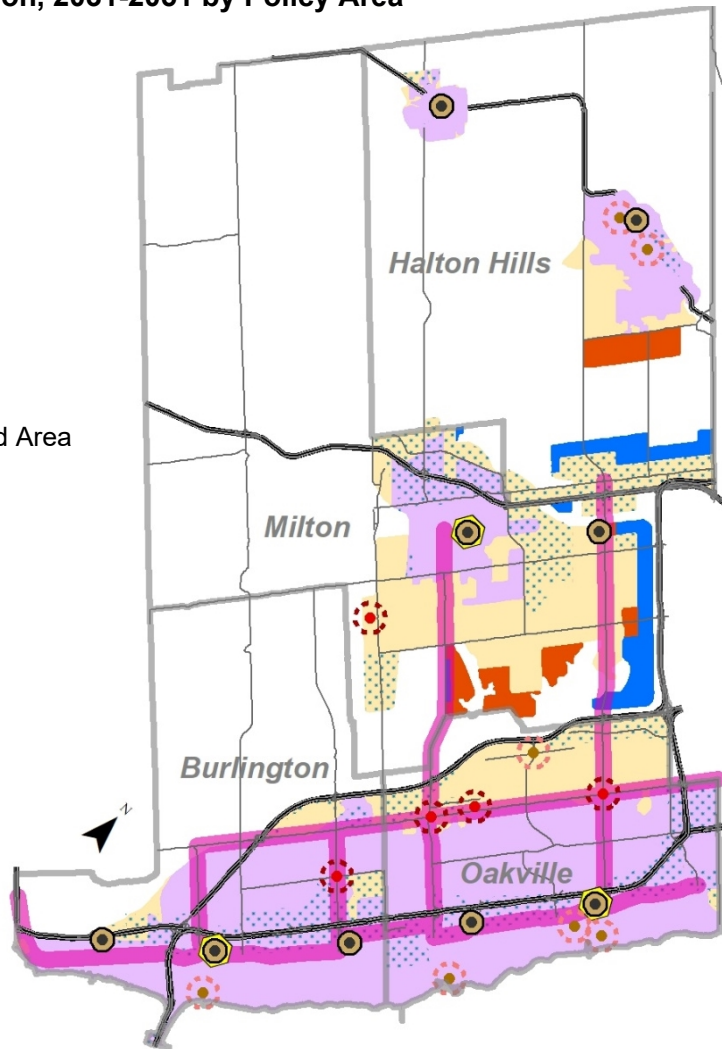


**Figure 1: Draft Recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept (February 2022)**

**Population & Employment Allocation, 2031-2051 by Policy Area**

Legend

- New Community Area
- New Employment Area
- Existing Employment Area
- Existing Designated Greenfield Area
- Built-Up Area
- Municipal Boundary
- Urban Growth Centre
- P Major Transit Station
- Primary Regional Node
- Secondary Regional Node
- Regional Corridor



|  | Population     | % of Total | Jobs           | % of Total    |
|--|----------------|------------|----------------|---------------|
| <b>Built-Up Area</b>                       | <b>116,500</b> | <b>35%</b> | <b>57,000</b>  | <b>38%</b>    |
| <b>Existing Designated Greenfield Area</b> | <b>150,500</b> | <b>45%</b> | <b>61,000</b>  | <b>41%</b>    |
| <b>New Community Area</b>                  | <b>62,000</b>  | <b>18%</b> | <b>31,500</b>  | <b>21%</b>    |
| <b>New Employment Area</b>                 | <b>n/a</b>     | <b>-</b>   | <b>31,500</b>  | <b>21%</b>    |
| <b>Rural Area (including Hamlets)</b>      | <b>4,000</b>   | <b>1%</b>  | <b>500</b>     | <b>&lt;1%</b> |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>333,000</b> |            | <b>150,000</b> |               |

**Table 1: Draft Recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept – Population Growth**

|                      | Population            |                       |                         |                         |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Municipality</u>  | <u>2021</u>           | <u>2031</u>           | <u>2051</u>             | <u>2031-2051 Growth</u> |
| Burlington           | 193,500               | 216,800               | 265,000                 | 48,200                  |
| Oakville             | 221,500               | 282,700               | 375,000                 | 92,300                  |
| Milton               | 138,500               | 185,600               | 335,000                 | 149,400                 |
| Halton Hills         | 65,600                | 81,800                | 125,000                 | 43,200                  |
| <b>Halton Region</b> | <b><u>619,100</u></b> | <b><u>766,900</u></b> | <b><u>1,100,000</u></b> | <b><u>333,100</u></b>   |

**Table 2: Draft Recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept – Household Growth**

|                      | Households            |                       |                       |                         |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Municipality</u>  | <u>2021</u>           | <u>2031</u>           | <u>2051</u>           | <u>2031-2051 Growth</u> |
| Burlington           | 74,100                | 85,100                | 107,800               | 22,700                  |
| Oakville             | 74,700                | 98,100                | 136,700               | 38,600                  |
| Milton               | 40,400                | 55,700                | 101,000               | 45,300                  |
| Halton Hills         | 21,800                | 27,500                | 41,300                | 13,800                  |
| <b>Halton Region</b> | <b><u>211,000</u></b> | <b><u>266,000</u></b> | <b><u>387,000</u></b> | <b><u>121,000</u></b>   |

**Table 3: Draft Recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept – Employment Growth**

|                      | Employment            |                       |                       |                         |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Municipality</u>  | <u>2021</u>           | <u>2031</u>           | <u>2051</u>           | <u>2031-2051 Growth</u> |
| Burlington           | 98,400                | 106,800               | 124,900               | 18,100                  |
| Oakville             | 110,800               | 139,300               | 180,100               | 40,800                  |
| Milton               | 44,500                | 67,900                | 130,100               | 62,200                  |
| Halton Hills         | 24,600                | 35,800                | 64,900                | 29,100                  |
| <b>Halton Region</b> | <b><u>278,400</u></b> | <b><u>349,800</u></b> | <b><u>500,000</u></b> | <b><u>150,200</u></b>   |

The Preferred Growth Concept as presented in this document contains certain adjustments that build on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept provided for Regional Council's information in November 2021. These adjustments are largely the result of Regional staff's ongoing consultation with Local Municipal staff and include:

- Minor changes to the 2021 base year figures for population and employment based on the new release of the Annual Demographics Estimates from Statistics Canada.
- Changes to the location and timing of growth, with Burlington and Oakville having slightly increased population, housing unit, and employment allocations and Milton and Halton Hills having corresponding decreases. This adjustment is largely driven by the shift of growth to strategic areas in the Designation Greenfield Area of north Oakville, particularly along the Trafalgar Corridor.
- Changes to the amount and location of new Community Area in the Town of Halton Hills. This results from a need identified by Town staff for additional lands to accommodate strategic priorities such as a Town-wide community park and a new Georgetown hospital and the recognition of existing stormwater management facilities within the new Community Areas south of Georgetown that do not contribute to the supply of land available to accommodate growth. An addition of approximately 50 hectares of Community Area lands has been incorporated into the Preferred Growth Concept as presented here in response to this request. Along with minor adjustments to the assumptions for persons per unit in the Designation Greenfield Area, this translates to the Community Area land need being 1,120 hectares and the total new urban lands being 2,190 hectares (as compared with 1,050 and 2,120 hectares, respectively, in the November 2021 Draft Preferred Growth Concept).
- Changes to the location of new Employment Areas in Halton Hills in order to locate them outside of the Focused Analysis Area and Preferred Route for the GTA West project to the extent possible and to prioritize areas with larger contiguous employment lands that avoid the Regional Natural Heritage System to a greater degree. The amount of land identified remains the same as in the Draft Preferred Growth Concept, but its location has changed. In particular the Employment Areas previously identified on the lands extending north from the existing Employment Areas and west of Winston Churchill Boulevard have been relocated.

These adjustments maintain the overall approach to accommodating growth in Halton to 2051 based on the results of the Land Needs Assessment methodology and the direction of more than 80 per cent of population growth (contained in more than 85 per cent of new housing units) and almost 80 per cent of employment growth between 2031 and 2051 to Halton's existing urban areas.

#### *Overview of the Draft 'IGMS – Preferred Growth Concept Report'*

The Draft 'Integrated Growth Management Strategy – Preferred Growth Concept Report' presented as Attachment #1 to this background information document provides detailed information that supports a strategy to accommodate growth in Halton to the 2051

planning horizon as well as the supporting technical analyses. In particular, the report contains the following:

- **Section 1 – Introduction**

The Report begins by identifying its purpose and providing background context on work completed to date as part of the Regional Official Plan Review and Integrated Growth Management Strategy. It also identifies the major elements of the Preferred Growth Concept and outlines the contents of the Report.

- **Section 2 – Key Principles for the Preferred Growth Concept**

This section of the Report provides an overview of the Planning Vision in the Regional Official Plan as well as the Key Principles developed as part of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy, both of which inform how growth is planned to be accommodated in Halton to 2051. It discusses Halton's Planning Vision which seeks to move the Region towards sustainability and details how each of the Key Principles is reflected in the Preferred Growth Concept.

- **Section 3 – Land Needs Assessment Overview**

The Land Needs Assessment methodology is a standard approach developed by the Province to assess the amount of land required to accommodate growth. The Province requires the Land Needs Assessment methodology to be used by the Region to plan for growth to 2051 in accordance with the Growth Plan. As a result, it is a key input to the Preferred Growth Concept. This section of the PGC Report provides an overview of how land needs were determined as part of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy and the findings of the assessment.

The Land Needs Assessment identifies a need for 2,190 hectares of land to accommodate certain types of growth in new Community and Employment Areas in Halton. In the case of the Community Area, a shortfall of 8,700 single and semi-detached housing units and 6,700 row housing which cannot be accommodated within the existing Urban Area was identified between 2021 and 2051. These units, in addition to approximately 1,300 apartment units identified to ensure the development of a complete community, resulted in a land need of 1,120 hectares. In the case of planning for employment, the Report concludes that 24,000 Employment Land Employment jobs cannot be accommodated within existing Employment Areas, resulting in a land need of 1,070 hectares.

The Lands Needs Assessment section of the PGC Report also addresses other aspects of the growth strategy that inform the Preferred Growth Concept, including an alternate intensification target and the consideration of employment conversions.

With respect to the intensification target, the Report notes that the Preferred Growth Concept is based on an alternate Region-wide intensification rate of 45 per cent of new housing units within the Built-Up Area, slightly lower than the 50 per cent target in the Growth Plan. This results from the specific context in Halton Region whereby

the Built-Up Area as identified by the Province in 2006 no longer reflects the current extent of developed areas in Halton and does not include all areas that are planned for higher density, transit-supportive growth in Strategic Growth Areas. However, the Report makes clear that the Preferred Growth Concept overall plans for an ambitious target of more than 85 per cent of new housing units being located within the existing Urban Area, thereby meeting the “intensification first” and minimization of urban expansion objectives of the Growth Plan.

In terms of employment conversions, this section of the PGC Report speaks to how changes to the existing Employment Areas in the Regional Official Plan have informed the Preferred Growth Concept, in particular by identifying the conversions that are included in the Preferred Growth Concept. The PGC Report is also supported by a specific appendix that summarizes the conversions, additions, and technical revisions to the existing Employment Areas.

- **Section 4 – Preferred Growth Concept Overview**

This section of the PGC Report provides an overview of the Preferred Growth Concept and sets out in detail how it proposes to accommodate population, housing, and employment growth in Halton Region to 2051. This includes summarizing the significant amount of growth allocated to the Built-Up Areas, existing Designated Greenfield Areas, and the Strategic Growth Areas that form key components of the Regional Urban Structure. The role of each Local Municipality in accommodating growth to 2051 is also profiled.

This section of the PGC Report also addresses the role of development phasing in ensuring the logical and orderly development of urban areas in a sustainable and cost-effective manner. It notes that the Land Needs Assessment is based on the assumption that all undeveloped Designated Greenfield Area identified through the Sustainable Halton Plan (and the earlier Halton Urban Structure Plan) will be nearing full development prior to any development occurring within any new urban expansion areas. It is anticipated that these lands can reasonably satisfy greenfield demand into the 2031-2041 period, and the Preferred Growth Concept has been based on these lands only nearing build-out around 2036.

- **Section 5 – Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Analysis**

As the Preferred Growth Concept includes an expansion to Halton’s settlement area boundary to accommodate growth to 2051, a number of impact assessments were undertaken to assist in the identification of the appropriate areas to locate this new urban land and to understand potential impacts.

This section of the Report provides a summary of the Agricultural Impact Assessment, the Natural Heritage / Water Resources Assessment, and a Mineral Aggregate Resources Assessment prepared in support of the Preferred Growth Concept. The detailed technical studies are provided as appendices to the PGC Report.

- **Section 6 – Climate Change**

Given the importance of climate change and in recognition of the Climate Change Emergency declared by Halton Region and the Local Municipalities, this section of the Report addresses the climate change lens applied throughout the IGMS and in the development of a Preferred Growth Concept, including the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Modelling / Assessment undertaken as part of this work.

The PGC Report addresses the long-held objectives of the ROPR related to sustainability and climate change that serves as a strong foundation for defining future growth and development. For example, over 80% of population, housing unit, and employment growth is directed to the existing approved urban areas in line with the approved Regional Urban Structure, representing an ambitious shift in how Halton grows. There is a greater reliance on accommodating growth in apartment buildings, optimizing existing infrastructure and land, aligning growth and transit, and protecting the Natural Heritage and Agricultural Systems. All of these components of the Preferred Growth Concept support Regional Council's climate objectives and the motion declaring a climate emergency.

The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Modelling demonstrates that the Preferred Growth Concept minimizes greenhouse gas emissions as compared to a baseline scenario. While other Concepts were shown to generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions, the differences were marginal and these approaches did not address many other important community planning and housing objectives.

In concert with the PGC Report, there are a series of policy directions being recommended for implementation through an amendment to the Regional Official Plan. These directions identify additional policies and actions to address greenhouse gas emissions and climate resiliency and build on existing policies and objectives related to climate change.

- **Section 7 – Technical Studies of the Preferred Growth Concept**

The IGMS has been approached in an integrated manner, recognizing the critical role of infrastructure and financial considerations to the development of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy and Preferred Growth Concept. This section of the Report summarizes the Water and Wastewater Assessment, the Transportation Assessment, and the Fiscal Impact Analysis work undertaken in support of the development of a Preferred Growth Concept.

These documents consider the capacity of its existing water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure and planned capital improvements in order to identify the potential infrastructure/system improvements and their associated fiscal impacts. Following the implementation of a Preferred Growth Concept, these studies will be updated and refined through the Region's master planning and development charges processes.

- **Section 8 – Next Steps**

The Report concludes by identifying the next steps in the Regional Official Plan Review and Integrated Growth Management Strategy process to implement the Preferred Growth Concept following a decision by Regional Council.

*Feedback on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept & Supplemental Information*

Regional staff have received comments in response to the Draft Preferred Growth Concept presented to Regional Council for information in November 2021. Burlington, Milton, and Oakville Councils have provided recommendations in response to reports from their staff on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept. There has also been significant discussion and comments from the public, including through e-mails sent to members of Regional and Local Councils expressing concerns with the Draft Preferred Growth Concept and expressing concerns with the proposal to expand Halton's existing urban boundaries. These inputs, as well as supplemental information prepared by Regional staff to address and clarify certain elements of the draft recommendation for a Preferred Growth Concept, is discussed below.

***Local Municipal Staff Reports***

In the period between the November 17, 2021 Council Workshop on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept and this February 9, 2022 Council Workshop, Local Municipal Councils received and considered reports on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept from the perspective of that Local Municipality. Attachment #8 contains the Local Municipal reports that were available at the time of writing of preparing this document.

City of Burlington:

The City's Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee received Report PL-06-22 on January 11, 2022, which provided comments from a Burlington perspective on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept and Draft Land Needs Assessment and recommended that these comments be submitted to the Region. The recommendations in the report were carried at Committee and subsequently approved by City Council at its meeting on January 18, 2022. Key comments from the City's report are discussed below.

The report observes that while Concepts 3A/3B were previously recommended by City staff, as they most closely align with the City's Strategic Plan and Official Plan, the Draft Preferred Growth Concept will result in an annual growth rate, overall population growth, and housing unit growth, consistent with the City's own Growth Analysis. From an employment growth perspective, the significant shift towards major office employment in strategic growth areas is supported, but the City recommends an aspirational direction beyond the 25% of major office employment directed to Major Transit Station Areas, versus Employment Areas.

With respect to the North Aldershot Policy Area (NAPA), Burlington supports the conclusion that it is not appropriate to include the NAPA as part of the Preferred Growth Concept for urban boundary expansion.

Burlington staff note that until the completed technical studies addressing climate change, infrastructure, agricultural impact, natural heritage/water resources, and financial impact, are released, it is not possible to provide comments from a Burlington perspective on how previous comments have been addressed. It is also noted that logical development phasing policies to ensure orderly development and the achievement of intensification targets will be important, as well as robust growth monitoring (i.e. update and monitoring of the Best Planning Estimates). Finally, it was noted that the Region had not provided responses to detailed comments contained in Appendix A to Burlington report PL-21-21.

In response, Region staff note that detailed technical studies have now been provided to Regional Council as part of the Draft PGC Report, providing information that supports the Preferred Growth Concept. It is also noted that the Draft PGC attempts to balance the needs of the four Local Municipalities, recognizing each municipality's role in accommodating growth to 2051. Regional staff have reviewed and provided responses to the specific comments from the City in Appendix A to PL-21-21. These responses are included in Attachment #2 to this document which provides responses to Local Municipal input on the Growth Concepts.

#### Town of Halton Hills:

The Town of Halton Hills report on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept was scheduled to be presented at a Special Council Meeting on February 1, 2022 and was not available at the time of writing of this report but will be shared once available. While Town Council has not yet provided comments on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept, in response to Town Report No. PD-2021-0045 on the Growth Concepts in July 2021, Town Council was supportive of a modest expansion to the Georgetown Urban Area of approximately 350 hectares (including to provide opportunities for the proposed redevelopment of the Georgetown Hospital) as well as the provision of 350 hectares of new employment lands. This input from the Town has been incorporated into the Preferred Growth Concept as presented in this document.

#### Town of Milton:

Town of Milton Council received Report DS-006-22 on January 17, 2022, which provided comments from a Milton perspective on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept and Draft Land Needs Assessment. The report recommended that the Town endorse the Preferred Growth Concept and request the Region to ensure an approach to development phasing that supports a steady stream of development in Milton. Town Council endorsed staff's recommendations and also requested that the Region consider the inclusion of lands in Milton under corridor protection should these lands not be required to support Provincial infrastructure projects.

The Town's report observes that the Region has made significant changes to reflect Town comments and concerns as outlined in Report DS-55-21 in June 2021, and recommends



that Milton Council endorse the Preferred Growth Concept. It is observed that the proposed quantum of new Employment and Community Area is less than what Town staff recommended, the Draft Preferred Growth Concept will provide a sufficient supply of new development land to 2051, and the Draft PGC also “right sizes” the quantum of development directed to the Built-Up Area (Old Milton).

The Town’s report notes that while the Draft Preferred Growth Concept presented at the November 2021 Council Workshop did not address development phasing, it is critical that the Region consider:

- Employment Area: Milton needs a steady flow of investment ready employment lands, as existing employment lands (i.e. Derry Green) will be built out by 2031;
- Community Area: Milton’s new Community Area lands need to be phased to ensure a continuous supply of market based housing beyond 2031, so development of Agerton, Trafalgar, Britannia and Milton Education Village communities must be delivered concurrently to ensure Milton has innovation/knowledge based job creation in mixed use areas, and substantial build-out of Boyne must be assumed before 2031.

Also, it noted that the update to the Best Planning Estimates, which will contain detailed phasing and geographic allocation of growth to implement the Preferred Growth Concept, needs to be based on ensuring a market-based supply of housing, a shovel ready supply of employment land, and a concurrent stream of development land balancing greenfield development and intensification.

In response, Regional staff note that development phasing is addressed in the Draft PGC Report based on the Land Needs Assessment analysis underpinning the Preferred Growth Concept, which is founded on the principle of accommodating population and employment growth through a focus on intensification, in addition to providing an adequate and continuous supply of new greenfield land as requested by the Town. With respect to the inclusion of lands under corridor protection, the Preferred Growth Concept as presented in this report identifies locations for the amount of land identified through the Land Needs Assessment. As a result, the addition of more land is not contemplated.

#### Town of Oakville:

The Planning and Development Council of the Town of Oakville received a report on the IGMS and Draft Preferred Growth Concept on January 17, 2022. The report provided comments from an Oakville perspective on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept and Draft Land Needs Assessment and recommended that these comments be submitted to the Region. In considering the report, Town Council endorsed the criticisms of the Draft Preferred Growth Concept in the Town’s staff report and supported their submission to Halton Region as part of the ROPR process. The Minutes from the Planning and Development Council will be considered by Town Council on January 31, 2022.

The Town's report notes that the Draft Preferred Growth Concept proposes to implement the Regional Urban Structure of strategic growth areas and higher order transit corridors, which would by extension, implement Oakville's Town-wide urban structure. Also noted is the fact that the Draft Preferred Growth Concept proposes to accommodate most of the new population, housing, and employment growth within existing approved settlement areas, but does propose settlement area boundary expansions.

Town staff observe that the Draft Preferred Growth Concept proposes a reduced 45 per cent intensification rate, due to the fact that housing units have been transferred from the Built-Up Area of Oakville to the existing Designated Greenfield Area, to respond to demand for apartment units in North Oakville, particularly in the Trafalgar and Dundas Urban Cores.

The report as presented indicates qualified support for the Draft Preferred Growth Concept as a compromise as it addresses a number of the Key Principles for the development of a Preferred Growth Concept, but identifies some remaining concerns. As noted above, in considering the report, Oakville's Planning and Development Council unanimously endorsed a motion to revise the recommendations in the report in order to forward to Halton Region the Town's criticisms of the Draft Preferred Growth Concept.

The report states that settlement area boundary expansion should be viewed as a last option when opportunities to accommodate growth in existing settlement areas are exhausted. It is noted that lands currently designated for urban development could accommodate additional population and employment growth beyond what the Region has allocated through the IGMS. Support is indicated for certain strategic settlement area boundary expansions that may be warranted for the purposes of providing community infrastructure and developing complete communities.

With respect to the use of a proposed 45 per cent intensification rate in the Draft Land Needs Assessment, Town staff expressed concerns that this may be based on an over-emphasis of market demand, resulting in unnecessary urban expansion, which could be avoided by revisiting the Land Needs Assessment to reduce the supply of ground-oriented housing. Despite this concern, Town staff offer qualified support for reducing the minimum intensification target, as the Draft Preferred Growth Concept supports Oakville's town-wide urban structure by concentrating growth in the existing Designated Greenfield Area.

Town staff also acknowledge the requirement to demonstrate conformity with the Growth Plan by July 2022, but are concerned that the ROPR Work Plan is out of order in dealing with fundamental policies on agriculture, natural heritage and climate change after growth management matters, including settlement boundary expansion, have been decided by Regional Council.

In response, Region staff notes that the Draft Land Needs Assessment prepared as an input to the Preferred Growth Concept followed the Land Needs Assessment Methodology set out by the Province, as required by the Growth Plan. Many of the concerns identified by the Town's report are addressed throughout Attachment #9, which

highlights specific questions about the Draft Land Needs Assessment and some of the assumptions used. Also, fundamental considerations related to growth management, including climate change, agriculture and natural heritage are addressed through technical studies described in the PGC Report.

### ***Key Questions on the Preferred Growth Concept***

The feedback from Local Municipal Councils and staff as well as the broader public discussion on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept has generated a number of questions and aspects of the Preferred Growth Concept discussed in this document that require clarification. Regional staff have prepared a document that provides information in response to these frequently asked questions. It is provided as Attachment #9 to this document and organizes the information into the broad categories identified below:

- Applying the Provincial Land Needs Assessment Methodology
- The Role of the Province of Ontario in Planning for Halton
- Climate Change Objectives and the Preferred Growth Concept
- Agriculture Impacts and the Preferred Growth Concept
- The Integrated Growth Management Strategy Process & Technical Studies
- Accommodating Growth in Existing Urban Areas & the Regional Urban Structure
- Accommodating Growth through a Measured Urban Boundary Expansion
- Planning for New Community Areas in the Designated Greenfield Areas
- Planning for New Employment Areas in the Designated Greenfield Areas

This supplemental document, in addition to the Draft PGC Report, provides important information that supports the approach to accommodating growth to Halton to 2051 as reflected in the Preferred Growth Concept.

### Regional Official Plan Review – Draft Policy Directions

As part of the ROPR process, Regional staff have also developed draft Policy Directions that are intended to build on and improve the solid foundation of the current Regional Official Plan. The Policy Directions are informed by the extensive public engagement that has occurred as part of the ROPR process.

The Policy Directions will implement the Integrated Growth Management Strategy and a Preferred Growth Concept and will also guide updates to Regional Official Plan policies on climate change, the rural and agricultural system, natural heritage system, the North Aldershot Planning Area, working with Indigenous Communities and Peoples, and plan implementation, among other things. The Draft Policy Directions Report is provided as Attachment #2 to this document.

### **Next Steps**

No decision will be made by Regional Council at the Workshop Meeting. The consideration of the Preferred Growth Concept as well as the ROPR Policy Directions will be rescheduled to a future meeting. A recommendation on a Preferred Growth Concept will be brought forward and Regional Council's decision will form the foundation of Halton's Integrated Growth Management Strategy. There is a Provincial requirement for Regional Council to adopt a Regional Official Plan Amendment addressing Growth Plan conformity by July 1, 2022. The Policy Directions related to other components of the ROPR, including agriculture, natural heritage, climate change, and plan implementation will be advanced in late-2022 and early-2023 in accordance with the ROPR Work Plan.

Attachments: Attachment #1 – Draft Preferred Growth Concept Report  
Attachment #2 – Draft Policy Directions Report  
Attachment #3 – Summary of Public Engagement  
Attachment #4 – Response to Advisory Committee Comments Table  
Attachment #5 – Response to Local Municipal Comments Table  
Attachment #6 – Map of Preferred Growth Concept  
Attachment #7 – Map of Supported Employment Conversions  
Attachment #8 – Local Municipal Reports on the Draft Preferred Growth Concept  
Attachment #9 – Supplemental Information & FAQs on the Preferred Growth Concept