



# The Corporation of the Town of Milton

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Report To:	Council
From:	Barbara Koopmans, Commissioner, Development Services
Date:	September 21, 2020
Report No:	DS-035-20
Subject:	Halton Regional Official Plan Review - Milton Response to Discussion Papers
Recommendation:	<b>THAT DS-035-20 regarding Halton Regional Official Plan Review - Milton Response to Discussion Papers be received;</b>  <b>AND THAT Planning staff be directed to forward the responses contained within Attachments 1 - 4 of DS-035-20 to Halton Region to ensure Milton's perspectives contribute to the formulation of policy directives through the Region's Official Plan review process.</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) is underway and currently in Phase 2.
- Phase 2 focusses on research, technical analysis and development of Discussion Papers related to key themes of the Regional Official Plan Review.
- There are five Discussion Papers in total that have been prepared: Rural and Agricultural System, Natural Heritage, Regional Urban Structure, Climate Change and North Aldershot Planning Area.
- The Discussion Papers explore issues and options on each topic that represent the range of choice in contemplating how the Regional Official Plan could achieve conformity with the Provincial Plans and Provincial Policy Statement.
- Milton Planning staff has prepared detailed responses to the Discussion Papers (with the exception of the North Aldershot Discussion Paper, as this paper is specific to Burlington) and is seeking Council direction to forward these responses to the Region to ensure Milton's perspectives contribute to the creation of policy directives through the Region's Official Plan review process.
- The responses have been prepared from a "Milton lens" and support Milton Council's endorsed urban structure and will contribute to "WE MAKE MILTON", Milton's New Official Plan project.
- Milton's Official Plan is required through Provincial policy to conform to the Regional Plan.



## REPORT

### Background

Halton Region is undertaking a Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) in accordance with Provincial requirements. The last comprehensive review of the Regional Official Plan (ROP) was the Sustainable Halton Process completed in 2009 that resulted in Regional Official Plan Amendments (ROPA's 37, 38, and 39), which implemented the policies of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2006 and the Greenbelt Plan 2005, amongst other policy initiatives. The current ROPR commenced in 2014 and is being undertaken in three phases:

- Phase 1 - Directions - Approval of a Work Plan (completed October 2016)
- Phase 2 - Discussion Papers (Underway 2017-present)
- Phase 3 - Policy Directions (Upcoming)

The Region is currently in Phase 2 of the process. Phase 2 will inform the development of ROP policies during the upcoming policy-drafting phase of the ROPR (Phase 3).

Region Planning staff presented the Phase 2 Discussion Papers at a Regional Council Workshop held July 8, 2020. At the July 15 meeting of Regional Council, Council directed staff to release the papers for public engagement. The papers contain both general and technical questions. Halton Region requires responses to the questions no later than September 28, 2020.

Through this ROPR, updates to specific theme areas and policies will reflect changing demographics, evolving land use trends and changes to the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2020, Greenbelt Plan 2017, A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019 (Growth Plan) and the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) 2017.

### Discussion

The Discussion Papers are a central component of Phase 2 of the Regional Official Plan Review. They explore issues and options on several themes that represent a range of choices in contemplating how the Regional Official Plan can achieve conformity with the Provincial Plans and Provincial Policy Statement.

The Discussion Papers have been prepared for the following themes:

- Regional Urban Structure;
- Rural and Agricultural Systems;
- Natural Heritage System;
- Climate Change; and,



# The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report #:  
DS-035-20  
Page 3 of 3

- North Aldershot Planning Area (Burlington specific)

The Discussion Papers are available for download here: [Regional Official Plan Review](#)

Attachments 1 - 4 of this report contain a high-level summary (extracted from the July 8, 2020 Regional Council Workshop) of each Discussion Paper relevant to Milton. Each attachment is theme specific and provides responses to the technical engagement questions for Council's consideration.

To ensure Milton's perspectives contribute to the formulation of policy directives through the Region's Official Plan review process, Planning staff recommends that these responses form Milton's official submission to Halton Region.

## Financial Impact

None arising from this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Koopmans, MPA, MCIP, RPP, CMO  
Commissioner, Development Services

For questions, please contact: Jill Hogan, Director, Planning Policy & Urban Design 905-878-7252 x2304.

## Attachments

Attachment 1 - Regional Urban Structure  
Attachment 2 - Rural and Agricultural Systems  
Attachment 3 - Natural Heritage System  
Attachment 4 - Climate Change

CAO Approval  
Andrew M. Siltala  
Chief Administrative Officer

## **Summary**

### **Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper**

- The Region will develop an integrated growth management strategy to the next planning horizon to implement Growth Plan policies
- Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper summarizes the relevant policy directions pertaining to Community Areas, Employment Areas and Settlement Areas
- The Discussion Paper will form the basis for consultation on growth management with Local Municipalities, conservation authorities, other public agencies, and the public
- The intent of this Discussion Paper is to inform a fulsome and robust policy discussion, there are no predetermined conclusions
- The Discussion Paper is intended to facilitate the exploration of ideas in the context of broad public engagement, where all relevant options are explored.

### **Technical Discussion Questions and Milton's Proposed Responses**

#### **Regional Urban Structure (Integrated Growth Management Strategy)**

- 1. How can the Regional Official Plan further support the development of Urban Growth Centres?**

##### **MILTON RESPONSE**

The Region should consider adjusting the limits of UGCs to exclude areas that will not develop within the horizon of the Plan. These adjustments should require consultation with lower-tier municipalities to finalize the boundaries prior to finalizing the MCR.

A large portion of Milton's UGC is located within the Floodplain. It would be helpful if mapping in the Region's Official Plan acknowledge that a large portion of Milton's UGC simply cannot meet the prescribed provincial densities.

- 2. Should the Region consider the use of Inclusionary Zoning in Protected Major Transit Station Areas to facilitate the provision of affordable housing?**

##### **MILTON RESPONSE**

Yes, the Region should seek to require affordable housing as a component of development in MTSAs. This should not be a blanket requirement, as not all development will be appropriate for affordable housing. A blanket requirement could have the unintended consequence of limiting growth in these areas if there is no demand (e.g., higher requirements for inclusionary zoning could be directed to areas with higher land values.) Targets for inclusionary zoning should be set at the lower-tier level.

The Region should develop an overall strategy to identify subcomponents of affordable housing to deliver through inclusionary zoning in MTSAs; this will help inform requirements for mandatory inclusionary zoning at the lower-tier level. It is also important to develop any potential targets jointly with lower-tier municipalities. The Region should also develop criteria to consider the types of development to impose inclusionary zoning and analyze the pros and cons of site-specific vs lower-tier blanket zoning.

We recommend the exploration of developer incentives to facilitate the delivery of units under this requirement. The zoning, once agreed to with lower-tiers, should be mandatory. The ownership model (private vs public) should be considered for the long-term viability and maintenance of units created under this zoning.

For the purpose of defining affordable housing, the ROP should identify an appropriate housing market area, having regard to patterns of social and economic interactions (e.g. inter-municipal migration and commuting), which may extend beyond the boundaries of the Region and may include upper, single and lower-tier municipalities. (see example A Place To Grow Definitions: Affordable Housing).

- 3. Should the Region consider the use of the Protected Major Transit Station Areas tool under the Planning Act, to protect the Major Transit Station Areas policies in the Regional Official Plan and local official plans from appeal? If so, should all Major Transit Station Areas be considered or only those Major Transit Station Areas on Priority Transit Corridors?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

No, this approach is too restrictive. It would limit the ability to recognize unique contexts through local planning.

MTSAs should be required to protect the opportunity to provide transit-oriented development by maximizing the potential for residents and jobs in these areas. The Region should work with lower-tier municipalities to establish the appropriate limits and density targets. MTSAs should generally be on priority transit corridors; however, additional locations at the request of lower-tier municipalities should be included on other higher order transit routes. While the growth estimates must reflect the 2051 Planning Horizon of a Place to Grow, not all of these areas will fully develop within the horizon. The anticipated development that will occur within the 2051 horizon should be estimated (and included in any land budget analysis for the Region) to the extent possible and used for growth and fiscal planning to avoid shortfalls related to unnecessary capital investments and unrealized development charges.

4. **From the draft boundaries identified in Appendix B and the Major Transit Station Area boundary delineation methodology outlined, do you have any comments on the proposed boundaries? Is there anything else that should be considered when delineating the Major Transit Station Areas?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

The density of proposed MTSAs should reflect the anticipated net density in areas designated for future higher density development by lower-tier municipalities. The final delineation and density target establishment for an MTSA should rely on detailed analysis prepared at the local level.

The Trafalgar Secondary Plan identifies and delineates the general boundary of the MTSA along the Trafalgar Corridor. The Region should recognize this through the the MCR.

In addition, the Trafalgar GO station densities should be set to match those in the draft Agerton Secondary Plan.

5. **How important are Major Transit Station Areas as a component of Halton's Regional Urban Structure? What is your vision for these important transportation nodes?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

Major Transit Station Areas are strategic areas that will realize transit supportive densities at stops on higher-order transit routes. Ideally, these areas will function with a mix of jobs and residents and serve as both origin and destination for transit trips. MTSAs must facilitate higher densities with a full range and mix of uses within the Planning horizon. Given that many areas will evolve over time, the Region's planning should not assume that these areas would fully build out by 2051. Rather, the focus should be on promoting appropriate development in these areas to the extent possible in this timeframe. The Region should also consider incentives to promote development in these areas, including expedited approvals processes and exclusion of development in these areas from the need to participate in the allocation program.

6. **Building on the 2041 Preliminary Recommended Network from the Determining Major Transit Requirement, 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?**

### **MILTON RESPONSE**

No and no. Corridors are very long; sustained higher density development along their entire length is not tenable. Development on corridors will, and should, vary. Density closer to transit stops will generally increase. In contrast, it may be appropriate to permit lower density development further away from corridors. It is more important to direct higher density development and a mix of uses to MTSA's and other strategic growth areas.

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?

### **MILTON RESPONSE**

No, additional multi-purpose and minor arterial roads to support a higher order Regional transit network should only be considered through technical study, such as a Transportation Master Plan.

We do however see merit in the identification of Main Street, from Ontario Street to the Milton GO Station, as priority for Regional high occupancy vehicles. - i.e. GO Transit Buses.

8. Are there any other nodes in Halton that should be identified within the Regional Official Plan from a growth or mobility perspective (i.e. on Map 1)? If so, what should the function of these nodes be and should a density target or unit yield be assigned in the Regional Official Plan?

### **MILTON RESPONSE**

No, this would require analysis through a structure study. It is important that the policy framework of the Region's Official Plan explicitly recognize local urban structure.

9. Are there any other factors that should be considered when assessing Employment Area conversion requests in Halton Region?

### **MILTON RESPONSE**

The Region should undertake an economic strategy to focus on the creation of labour markets, with the objective of creating accommodating employment sectors. While demand will likely remain for some traditional employment area locations, the Region should undertake a strategy to accommodate emerging employment trends to anticipate and provide land use permissions that encourage employers to locate in Halton. In this context, it is important to identify strategic location to achieve these economic outcomes. Retention of land essential to accommodating Employment Area type businesses in the Region's economic strategy is critical. Areas that are not essential to this function could facilitate the accommodation other employment

uses in a mixed-use format. Moreover, additional locational criteria would be helpful in determining which employment areas could be suitable for conversion.

**10. Are there any areas within Halton Region that should be considered as a candidate for addition to an Employment Area in the Regional Official Plan?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

Please refer to Milton staff reports PD-023-18 and PD-011-19 that identify the new Employment Areas that should be included into the Settlement Area Boundary to 2051.

\*\*note - these reports were previously submitted to the Region.

**11. How can the Regional Official Plan support employment growth and economic activity in Halton Region?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

The Region should undertake an economic strategy to focus on the creation of labour markets, with the objective of creating accommodating employment sectors. While demand will likely remain for some traditional employment area locations, a strategic plan to accommodate emerging employment trends could be undertaken by the Region to anticipate and provide land use permissions that encourage employers to locate in Halton. In this context, employment planning should be structured to create labour pools within easy commuting of population, and should strive to create economic clusters of businesses that can co-locate and benefit from being in close proximity to one another. Achieving complete communities and reducing the need to travel to work requires an appropriate balance between housing and jobs. There is a need to address the disparity between the size, composition and skills of the workforce within Milton and the number and distribution of corresponding employment opportunities within the municipality by directing employment developments to areas of housing growth and vice versa.

To position Halton within the greater economic region, the ROP should provide strategic direction for a co-ordinated approach to planning across municipal boundaries on matters such as economic development and transportation. (see for example A Place To Grow 5.2.3.2.f))

**12. What type of direction should the Regional Official Plan provide regarding planning for uses that are ancillary to or supportive of the primary employment uses in employment areas? Is there a need to provide different policy direction or approaches in different Employment Areas, based on the existing or planned employment context?**

### **MILTON RESPONSE**

Local municipal planning and by-laws should specify the policies and provisions related to ancillary employment uses. This allows for tailoring of the policies depending on different employment areas. The ROP policies should identify this process.

- 13. How can the Regional Official Plan support planning for employment on lands outside Employment Areas, and in particular, within Strategic Growth Areas and on lands that have been converted? What policies tools or approaches can assist with ensuring employment growth and economic activity continues to occur and be planned for within these areas?**

### **MILTON RESPONSE**

The Region should undertake an economic strategy to focus on the creation of labour markets, with the objective of creating accommodating employment sectors. While demand will likely remain for some traditional employment area locations, a strategic plan to accommodate emerging employment trends could be undertaken by the Region to anticipate and provide land use permissions that encourage employers to locate in Halton. In this context, there is a significant increase in the demand for employers to locate in mixed-use urban areas outside of traditional employment areas; appropriate opportunities to permit mixed-use forms of development, guided by an overall economic strategy provides a strong basis for encouraging new employers to the Region.

- 14. Are there other factors, besides those required by the Growth Plan, Regional Official Plan or Integrated Growth Management Strategy Evaluation Framework that Halton Region should consider when evaluating the appropriate location for potential settlement area expansions?**

### **MILTON RESPONSE**

The requests of the lower-tier municipalities should determine the appropriate scale and location for settlement area boundary expansions (SABE). In this regard, please refer to Milton report PD-023-18 requesting that Milton's whitebelt lands be included in the SABE to enable long-term comprehensive planning.

- 15. What factors are important for the Region to consider in setting a minimum Designated Greenfield Area 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?**

## **MILTON RESPONSE**

A Place to Grow 2020 requires that the Region take a market-based approach to housing. The 2020 Land Needs Assessment (LNA) references the use of the background forecast and baseline reference scenario (prepared by Hemson Consulting) as a basis for establishing a market-based supply of housing. This work forecasts that singles and semis/ rows/ apartments and accessory units will respectively comprise 49%/26%/25% of residential unit growth from 2016-2051. The Region should be using this as a scenario for providing a market-based supply of housing, modifying the unit mix as necessary to achieve a Place to Grow's minimum Designated Greenfield Area density target. Such modification will likely alter the unit mix significantly away from a market-based supply of housing to more compact communities required by the Growth Plan. Further increases in the density target should support the provision of housing to meet the needs of current and future residents, and should not be arbitrarily increased without significant justification from both demographic and market perspectives.

Similarly, employment forecasts are contained in the Hemson work. The work forecasts Major Office, Population-Related and Employment Land and Rural employment to 2051 to form a basis for categorizing employment growth. Some portion of the Major office and population-related employment forecasts will be accommodated in the Designated Greenfields and the Region is encouraged to anticipate more complete communities in the Greenfields when undertaking their growth management work - this may require a different approach to planning for, and achieving jobs in new Greenfield Community Areas.

**16. Are there any additional considerations or trends that Halton Region should review in terms of the Regional Urban Structure component of the Regional Official Plan Review?**

## **MILTON RESPONSE**

We have no additional comments or suggestions at this time, and we appreciate the opportunity to share our ideas and input.

## **Summary**

### **Rural and Agricultural Systems**

- Theme area topics include mapping and designation of prime agricultural areas, Agriculture-Related Uses, On-Farm Diversified Uses, Cemeteries, Agricultural Impact Assessments and Special Needs Housing
- The intent of the Rural and Agricultural System Discussion Paper is to inform a fulsome and robust policy discussion, there are no predetermined conclusions
- The Discussion Paper is intended to facilitate the exploration of ideas in the context of broad public engagement, where all relevant options are explored

## **Technical Discussion Questions and Milton's Proposed Responses**

### **Rural and Agricultural System**

Mapping Options:

1. **Should the updated ROP designate prime agricultural areas with a separate and unique land use designation?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

Yes. The ROP should be updated to include a separate and unique land use designation for Prime Agricultural Areas. The following is a summary of why we support this approach:

1. The Provincial policy framework has evolved since ROPA 38 and the PPS and Growth Plan now require the Region to designate Prime Agricultural Areas. Although there may be ways other than a designation (i.e., policy direction) to protect prime agricultural areas, the Region should aim for the most transparent and least complex approach.
2. The Region's current approach to the Agricultural system is not intuitive. A separate and unique land use designation would reflect a more simplified approach to planning for the agricultural system, and it would improve the clarity of the ROP and make it easier for users to understand the Regional policy framework and provincial/regional goals. A Prime Agricultural Area designation is used by most municipalities across Ontario because it is effective, clear, and easy to understand.

3. The ROP currently identifies prime agricultural areas as a ‘constraint to development’. This approach does not fully support current Provincial policy direction, which aims for a thriving agricultural industry and rural economy by permitting a range of different uses on agricultural land. A separate and unique land use designation would positively influence the agricultural (and rural) area by recognizing, communicating, and supporting the outlook that prime agricultural areas make a significant contribution to Ontario's jobs and economic prosperity.

In addition, a separate and unique Rural land use designation should be applied to non-prime agricultural areas for clarity, transparency, and ease of use. The reasons above also support this position.

2. Are there any additional pros and cons that could be identified for any of the options?

### MILTON RESPONSE

The following table identifies additional Pros and Cons to be considered for the Options identified in the Region’s Discussion Paper:

Option	Additional Pros to be Considered	Additional Cons to be Considered
1	Designation of Prime Agricultural (and Rural) Areas communicates that the Agricultural System is important and valued for its significant contribution to Ontario's jobs and economic prosperity.	None.
2	Designation of Prime Agricultural (and Rural) Areas communicates that the Agricultural System is important and valued for its significant contribution to Ontario's jobs and economic prosperity.	None.
3	Designation of Prime Agricultural (and Rural) Areas communicates that the Agricultural System is important and valued for its significant contribution to Ontario's jobs and economic prosperity.	Overly complicated approach that makes an unnecessary distinction between key features that are in the Prime Agricultural Area and key features that are not in the Prime Agricultural Area.
4	None.	Overly complicated and not intuitive approach. Not keeping with the evolution of planning for agricultural areas in Ontario. Does not support the overarching Provincial vision for a thriving

Option	Additional Pros to be Considered	Additional Cons to be Considered
		agricultural industry and rural economy.

**3. Do you have a preferred mapping option? If so, why?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

Mapping Option 1 is our preferred mapping option because:

- It conforms with Provincial direction;
- It is the most transparent and least complex approach;
- It is the most evolved and contemporary approach;
- It most effectively communicates that the Agricultural System is important and valued for its significant contribution to Ontario's jobs and economic prosperity.

In addition, we are not in agreement with the statement that “*the designation of Prime Agricultural Areas without the designation of Key features could be perceived to place uneven emphasis on the protection of Prime Agricultural Areas over the protection of key features*” (page 23). An overlay designation is not a less important (or a more important) layer of policy; rather, it is simply an added level of policy - to be applied in addition to the policies of the underlying designation. Therefore, this approach places equal emphasis on the protection of the NHS and Agricultural System. The Region should use this process as an opportunity to incorporate more contemporary planning tools, such as overlays, and to communicate with residents/the public why this approach is more effective.

Furthermore, we are not in agreement with the statement that Option 1 “*does not depict the NHS as a systems based approach*”. Our view is that, although 2 separate overlay designations are identified, they collectively make up the NHS and work together to function as a system. This can easily be communicated through policy. Also, by labelling these overlay designations as a Natural Heritage System (NHS) the Region is clearly indicating that the two overlays make up a system.

**Agriculture-Related Uses:**

**4. Should the ROP permit the agriculture-related uses as outlined in the [Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas](#) in its entirety?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

In terms of implementing the Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas, Section 1.1 of the Provincial document states that the guidelines are meant to complement the PPS, and do not establish specific standards. Therefore:

- The ROP must permit agriculture-related uses in all prime agricultural areas, in accordance with the definition and Section 2.2.3.1 of the PPS.
- Section 2.2.1 of the Provincial Guidelines expands on Section 2.2.3.1 of the PPS by describing a set of criteria that “*must be met*” (page 11) in order to qualify as an agriculture-related use. The ROP must also implement these criteria in their entirety.
- Section 2.2.2 of the Provincial Guidelines expands on Section 2.2.3.1 of the PPS by providing examples of permitted agriculture-related uses, provided the above noted criteria are met. However, this is not an exhaustive list, and the criteria in Section 2.2.1 should be used to determine permitted uses.

As discussed in our responses to questions below, additional conditions/restrictions, should be determined/established at the local municipal level.

**5. What additional conditions or restrictions should be required for any agriculture-related uses?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

The agricultural context in Halton Region varies significantly across each local municipality, and this is evidenced in the Discussion Paper by the following figures:

- Figure 3c: CLI – Soil Capability Class 1, 2 & 3 (Halton’s Land Base)
- Figure 4: Gross Farm Receipts for Halton Region for 2016
- Figure 6: Agricultural Area Designation

Therefore, it is our view that the establishment of additional conditions or restrictions for agriculture-related uses that would apply broadly across Halton Region is not appropriate. Rather, if there is a need for additional conditions/restrictions, they should be determined/established at the local municipal level - based on local circumstances and in consultation with each local agricultural and rural community.

This is consistent with the direction in Section 2.5.1 (Official Plan Implementation) of the Provincial Guidelines, which state that “*criteria for these uses may be based on these provincial guidelines or municipal approaches that achieve the same objectives*”.

**6. The [Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas](#) limit on-farm diversified uses to no more than 2 per cent of the farm property on which the uses are located to a maximum of 1 hectare. As well, the gross floor area of buildings used for on-farm diversified uses is limited (e.g., 20 per cent of the 2 per cent). Are these the appropriate size limitations for Halton farms?**

## MILTON RESPONSE

It is important to clarify that the “Limited in Area” guidelines identified above are described as “recommended” in Section 2.3.1(3) of the Provincial Guidelines (page 19-21). Also, as noted earlier, Section 1.1 of the guidance document states that *“where specific parameters are proposed, they represent best practices rather than specific standards that must be met.”*

As mentioned, since the agricultural context in Halton Region varies significantly across each local municipality, it is our view that the establishment of additional conditions/restrictions for agricultural-related and/or on-farm diversified uses that apply broadly across Halton Region is not appropriate. Therefore, we do not agree with a Region-wide approach to regulating on-farm diversified uses, and we do not believe that the size limitations identified in the Provincial Guidelines should be applied broadly across Halton.

Rather, the “Limited in Area” guidelines should be assessed at a local municipal level, based on local circumstances and in consultation with our local agricultural and rural community. Again, this is consistent with the direction in Section 2.5.1 (Official Plan Implementation) of the Provincial Guidelines, which state that *“criteria for these uses may be based on these provincial guidelines or municipal approaches that achieve the same objectives”*.

### On-Farm Diversified Uses:

7. Should the Regional Official Plan permit on-farm diversified uses as outlined in the [Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas](#) in its entirety?

## MILTON RESPONSE

Again, the Provincial Guidelines are meant to complement the PPS, and do not establish specific standards. Therefore:

- The ROP must permit on-farm diversified uses in all prime agricultural areas, in accordance with the definition and Section 2.2.3.1 of the PPS.
- Section 2.2.1 of the Provincial Guidelines expands on Section 2.2.3.1 of the PPS by describing a set of criteria that *“must be met”* (page 11) in order qualify as an on-farm diversified uses. The ROP must also implement these criteria in their entirety.
- Section 2.2.2 of the Provincial Guidelines expands on Section 2.2.3.1 of the PPS by providing examples of permitted on-farm diversified uses, provided the above noted criteria are met. However, this is not an exhaustive list, and the criteria in Section 2.3.1 should be used to determine permitted uses.

Also, additional conditions/restrictions, should be determined/established at the local municipal level, as discussed below.

**8. What additional conditions or restrictions should be required for any on-farm diversified uses?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

We do not agree with a Regional approach to regulating on-farm diversified uses, and we do not believe that the size limitations identified in the Provincial Guidelines should be applied broadly across Halton. Rather, any additional conditions or restrictions should be assessed at a local municipal level, based on local circumstances and in consultation with our local agricultural and rural community.

Again, this is consistent with the direction in Section 2.5.1 (Official Plan Implementation) of the Provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas, which state that "*criteria for these uses may be based on these provincial guidelines or municipal approaches that achieve the same objectives*".

**9. Should the Regional Official Plan permit on-farm diversified uses as outlined in the [Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas](#) in its entirety?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

This is the same question as #7. See response to question #7.

**10. To what extent should the updated Regional Official Plan permit cemeteries in:**

- Urban areas
- Rural areas
- Prime agricultural areas

**Explain the criteria (e.g., factors) that are important to you and should be considered when evaluating cemetery applications for each?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

Milton staff have reviewed a 2016 report prepared for Halton Region called "Policy Approaches to Planning for Cemeteries in Halton Region" (University of Guelph), and we are in agreement with many of the recommendations of that report in regard to permitting cemeteries in the Region. The following table provides our suggestions on the extent to which the updated ROP should permit cemeteries in specific areas of the Region:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Permissions for Cemeteries</b>	<b>Justification</b>
<b>Urban Areas</b>	Cemeteries should be -permitted subject to criteria.	Section 1.1.1 of the PPS indicates that healthy, liveable, and safe communities are sustained by accommodating institutional uses, including cemeteries. Although the PPS does not explicitly indicate where cemeteries should be located, it is implied that they are required as a component of strong healthy communities.
<b>Rural Areas</b>	Cemeteries should be -permitted subject to criteria.	Section 1.1.5.2 of the PPS explicitly identifies cemeteries as permitted uses in rural lands.
<b>Prime Agricultural Areas</b>	Cemeteries should not be permitted in prime agricultural areas. Instead, cemeteries should be required to undergo a ROPA and address the necessary criteria established in the PPS.	Cemeteries are not a permitted use in Prime Agricultural Areas, in accordance with however, the PPS does provide guidance for permitting non-agricultural uses in these areas in section 2.3.6.1.

It should also be noted that any new cemeteries must adhere to the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Greenbelt Plan, where applicable.

In terms of criteria, the 2016 report noted above also provides a best practices review on other regional policies in regard to cemeteries. Based on our review, the following table identifies some of the factors that should be considered when evaluating cemetery applications in each area (however, we are not suggesting that they are the only factors)

<b>Area</b>	<b>Recommended Criteria for Permitting Cemeteries</b>
<b>Urban Areas</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) There is a local or regional demand for cemetery space that is not being met, or will not be met in the near future by existing cemeteries within a reasonable distance of the service area.</li> <li>2) The cemetery will not prevent the Region from achieving intensification targets.</li> <li>3) There are no reasonable alternatives outside of the urban area, and either; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sufficient evidence has been provided indicating that the community is “incomplete” due to the absence of a cemetery, or;</li> <li>b. There is a demand for park space that the cemetery can service as a multi-use space.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

Area	Recommended Criteria for Permitting Cemeteries
Rural Areas	1) There is a local or regional demand for cemetery space that is not being met, or will not be met in the near future by existing cemeteries within a reasonable distance of the service area.
Prime Agricultural Areas	Cemeteries should address the necessary criteria established in the PPS for non-agricultural uses.

There are additional development criteria that should be established either at the Regional or local level, dealing with factors such as:

- Servicing;
- Parking and traffic requirements;
- Cemetery accessory uses;
- Environmental impacts;
- Landscaping requirements; and
- Public access.

Finally, the Region will need to respond to cultural needs and alternative practices to in-ground burial and this should be addressed in the ROP, particularly as it relates to assessing regional demand.

**11. Do the Agricultural Impact Assessment policy requirements in the ROP sufficiently protect agricultural operations in the Prime Agricultural Area and Rural Area?**

**If not, what additional requirements do you think are needed?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

We are of the opinion that the Agricultural Impact Assessment policy requirements in the ROP do sufficiently protect agricultural operations in the Prime Agricultural and Rural Areas. Policy 101(2) meets this objective.

It may also be useful to more specifically cite the need for an AIA in additional ROP policies for the purpose of clarity and ease of use; however, this could also be achieved by adding more specific language in the introduction/commentary of the actual Regional AIA Guidance document.

**12. Should the requirements for an Agricultural Impact Assessment be included in any other new or existing Regional Official Plan policies?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

It may also be useful to specifically cite the need for an AIA in ROP policies dealing with Renewable Energy Projects and Institutional, Commercial, and Industrial Uses;

however, if the requirement is already identified in a Provincial Policy document, it is not actually necessary and would simply duplicate policies that are already applicable. In this case, adding more specific language in the introduction/commentary of the actual Regional AIA Guidance document would be a more simplified approach.

### **Should special needs housing be permitted outside of urban areas and under what conditions?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

Yes. The ROP should be updated to expressly permit special needs housing in the rural area. The following is a summary of why we support this approach:

1. The Provincial Policy Statement states that Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options by permitting and facilitating all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents, including special needs requirements (Section 1.4.3 b.). There is no distinction made by Provincial Policy between urban and rural areas for these uses.
2. In accordance with the Human Rights Code, everyone in Ontario has the right to be free from discrimination in housing based on membership in a Code-protected group. It is a human rights principle that people should be able to live in the community of their choice without discrimination. Special needs housing, with or without support workers should therefore be permitted in a way that does not subject the residents to higher levels of scrutiny and expectations than other forms of residential housing.
3. Based on engagement with our local community as part of our 2018 Supportive Housing study, we heard that from housing providers that certain types of special needs/supportive housing will benefit from a rural setting.

In terms of applying conditions to these uses, we are in support of permitting special needs housing in all dwelling types, provided that such dwellings comply with all relevant zoning regulation, by-laws, codes and other regulations. In both the urban and rural area, special needs housing should not be subject to higher levels of scrutiny and expectations than other forms of residential housing.

Further, we are not in agreement that the criteria established through the Provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas should apply to special needs housing in the rural area, as noted on page 60 of the Regional Discussion Paper. These criteria apply to Prime Agricultural Areas (not Rural) and focus on supporting agriculture and/or protecting agricultural uses as the primary use of a property, and we are unclear how they apply to housing in rural areas. Furthermore, the "limited in area" principle in the Provincial Guidelines would be in violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please note: through LOPA 01/19 and Z-01/19, special needs/shared housing is currently permitted in both the urban and rural residential areas of Milton (in accordance with Section 2.1 of the Ontario Human Rights Code), and it is intended that this be our local approach as we move forward with the new Official Plan Project.

**13. Are there any additional considerations or trends that Halton Region should review in terms of the Rural and Agricultural System component of the Regional Official Plan Review?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

We have no additional comments or suggestions at this time, and we appreciate the opportunity to share our ideas and input.

## Summary Natural Heritage

- Natural heritage has a central place within the planning vision for Halton as described in the Region Official Plan.
- Two concepts feature prominently: “sustainable development” and “landscape permanence”.
- Goal of the Regions Official Plan Review process is to strengthen the long-term viability of Halton’s natural heritage and water resources.
- Identifying actions that are needed to achieve the Region's natural heritage objectives.
- The intent of the Natural Heritage System Discussion Paper is to inform a fulsome and robust policy discussion, there are no predetermined conclusions.

## Technical Discussion Questions and Milton’s Proposed Responses

### Natural Heritage

1. **As required by the Growth Plan, the new Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan mapping and policies must be incorporated into the Regional Official Plan. Based on options outlined in the Natural Heritage Discussion paper, what is the best approach in incorporating the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan into the Regional Official Plan?**

#### MILTON RESPONSE

Option 2 - *Harmonize the Provincial Natural Heritage Systems* is the best approach to incorporate the Natural Heritage System (NHS) in the Regional Official Plan. Option 2 would allow the Regional Natural Heritage System (RNHS) to continue independently. There would be a clear distinction between the Regional Natural Heritage System (RNHS) and the Provincial Plan Systems. This approach would allow flexibility to include policies that reflect local considerations.

We strongly oppose Option 3 - *Create an updated Regional Natural Heritage System that incorporates the Provincial Natural Heritage Systems*. This broad stroked approach would present challenges in terms of policy restrictions, whereby, the most restrictive policy would apply everywhere. This is not the intent of the Provincial NHS. We must ensure that local considerations are recognized.

2. **Regional Natural Heritage System policies were last updated through Regional Official Plan Amendment 38. Are the current goals and objectives for the Regional Natural Heritage System policies still relevant/appropriate? How the can Regional Official Plan be revised further to address these goals and objectives?**

## **MILTON RESPONSE**

The creation of the ROPA 38 RNHS system relied on air photo interpretation and not scientific study. Further, the RHNS included an additional 30-metre buffer, again without any scientific basis.

Why is this an issue?

While the Regional Plan allows the ability to refine (allowing for additions or deletions) the RNHS through local study, the consistent interpretation is that the RHNS, including the 30-metre buffer is the “starting point” for refinement. Local municipalities invest tremendous resources to undertake the essential technical fieldwork to determine what features require protection and what an appropriate buffer should be, based on science. The RNHS is arbitrary and the Regional Official Plan should promote the recognition of scientific study as the foundation to determine appropriate (ROP) refinements. The policy framework must recognize the role of a NHS in an urbanizing environment.

- 3. To ease the implementation of buffers and vegetation protection zones, should the Region include more detailed policies describing minimum standards?**

## **MILTON RESPONSE**

No, the ROP should NOT include detailed policies describing minimum standards. In terms of buffer implementation in the urban area, the ROP should put an emphasis that any buffer review and refinement should be determined through detailed technical study when land-use, transportation, and servicing plans are available. Emphasis placed on identifying Key Feature characteristics and functions is critical, along with their respective sensitivities associated with the range of short-term to long-term activities expected with the various land use types proposed in the plan area.

- 4. Given the policy direction provided by the Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial plans, how should policy and mapping address the relationship between natural heritage protection and agriculture outside of the Urban Area or the Natural Heritage System?**

## **MILTON RESPONSE**

Mapping Option 1 is our preferred mapping option because:

- It conforms with Provincial direction;
- It is the most transparent and least complex approach;
- It is the most evolved and contemporary approach;

- It most effectively communicates that the Agricultural System is important and valued for its significant contribution to Ontario's jobs and economic prosperity.

In addition, we are not in agreement with the statement that “*the designation of Prime Agricultural Areas without the designation of Key features could be perceived to place uneven emphasis on the protection of Prime Agricultural Areas over the protection of key features*”). An overlay designation is not a less important (or a more important) layer of policy; rather, it is simply an added level of policy - to be applied in addition to the policies of the underlying designation. Therefore, this approach places equal emphasis on the protection of the NHS and Agricultural System. The Region should use this process as an opportunity to incorporate more contemporary planning tools, such as overlays, and to communicate with residents/the public why this approach is more effective.

Furthermore, we are not in agreement with the statement that Option 1 “*does not depict the NHS as a systems based approach*”. Our view is that, although 2 separate overlay designations are identified, they collectively make up the NHS and work together to function as a system. This can easily be communicated through policy. Also, by labelling these overlay designations as a Natural Heritage System (NHS) the Region is clearly indicating that the two overlays make up a system.

**The Greenbelt Plan 2017 and Growth Plan 2019 require municipalities to identify Water Resource Systems in Official Plans. Based on the two (2) options provided in the Natural Heritage Discussion Paper, how should the Water Resource System be incorporated into the ROP?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

Mapping Option 1 is our preferred mapping option, with the caveat that the ROP would include separate policies pertaining to the two distinct systems. This approach would recognize the overlaps between the two systems and would reduce policy duplication in the plan.

- 5. Preserving natural heritage remains a key component of Halton’s planning vision. Should Halton Region develop a Natural Heritage Strategy and what should be included in such a strategy?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

No, a Natural Heritage Strategy would not be a “value-add”. It would be an added layer of bureaucracy. The policies of the ROP are mandatory. Guidelines/strategies are general and non-mandatory. Since the determination of NHS components is technical in nature, the ROP policy framework should be adequate and easily interpreted.

**Should the Regional Official Plan incorporate objectives and policies to support/recognize the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

While the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System does not fall within the boundaries of Milton, there is merit in the ROP containing policies to support the innovative partnership to protect, connect and restore natural lands and open space between the Niagara Escarpment and Cootes Paradise in Hamilton Harbour.

- 6. The Regional Official Plan is required to conform to applicable Source Protection Plans and must be updated through this Regional Official Plan Review process. What is the best approach to address Drinking Water Source Protection policies and mapping?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

A distinct policy section and mapping component should be included in the ROP in recognition of the three Source Protection Plans within Halton Region. While changes may occur to Source Protection mapping during the life of the ROP, the five-year review can incorporate any updates.

**The Regional Official Plan is required to conform to the updated Natural Hazard policies in the PPS. What is the best approach to incorporate Natural Hazard policies and mapping?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

The ROP should identify and regulate development exposed to natural heritage JOINTLY with area municipalities, provincial agencies and conservation authorities.

**How can Halton Region best support the protection and enhancement of significant woodlands through land use policy?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

The existing definition of Significant Woodland and associated criterion in the ROP is sufficient and appropriate. What would be a value-add to the policy framework is to include a list of exclusions from the definition - i.e. such woodlands managed for the production of fruits, nuts, nursery stock or Christmas trees and woodlands dominated by invasive non-native species.

- 7. Are there any additional considerations or trends that Halton Region should review in terms of the Natural Heritage component of the Regional Official Plan Review?**

## **MILTON RESPONSE**

Technical fieldwork should be the starting point to determine the NHS and associated buffer requirements in an urbanizing environment.

## **Summary**

### **Climate Change**

- The Climate Change Discussion Paper seeks to fulfil the following objectives:
  - Educate the public on the current impacts of climate change on the region;
  - Underline the policy directions guiding the Regional climate change conformity requirement; and
  - Highlight the main policy areas where public input is needed to formulate a comprehensive land use response to climate change.
- The intent of the Climate Change Discussion Paper is to inform a fulsome and robust policy discussion, there are no predetermined conclusions
- The Discussion Paper is intended to facilitate the exploration of ideas in the context of broad public engagement, where all relevant options are explored

## **Technical Discussion Questions and Milton's Proposed Responses**

### **Climate Change**

#### **GENERAL MILTON COMMENT**

Generally, the ROP should provide the policy foundation for securing Regional funding of climate change adaptation. The local municipalities will not be able to implement climate change initiatives on their own.

1. **Have you felt the impacts of climate change on your community? What impacts are of most concern to you in the next 20 years?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

On July 22, 2019, the Town of Milton Council passed a motion declaring a Climate Emergency. Several delegations were made at the meeting, highlighting ways in which the climate change was impacting the community. It was noted that climate change was already influencing the Town's ability to provide and maintain certain Town facilities, for example, in 2019 Milton closed its outdoor ice rinks due to a milder winter climate. It was also reported that 1000's of acres of agricultural land south of Milton were unable to be planted in Spring 2019 due to the wetter than normal conditions.

The main concerns are related to human health, community safety, biodiversity loss, food security and fiscal sustainability. For example, heatwaves pose increased health

risks and a higher incidence of pests and diseases, such as Emerald Ash Borer. While intense rainfall has consequences for flood risk, storm water management and other municipal infrastructure.

2. **How do you think the Regional Official Plan can help Halton respond to climate change? What mitigation and adaptation actions would you like to see embedded in the Regional Official Plan?**

### **MILTON RESPONSE**

The need to prepare for climate change through adaptation should be fully integrated with other land use planning objectives, including providing for housing and jobs, preserving natural and cultural heritage and supporting sustainable transportation and infrastructure.

The ROP should provide a framework for leveraging Federal and Provincial programs and prioritizing Regional funding to support and assist the efforts of local municipalities.

The Regional Official Plan can help Halton respond to climate change and reduce climate risks by:

- Limiting development in hazardous areas;
- Ensuring the built environment is resilient to climate stressors;
- Preserving and enhancing natural environments;
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of upper and lower tier municipalities;
- Providing information and fostering dialogue about climate change opportunities, risks and adaptation.

The Regional Official Plan should provide a high-level policy context for climate change adaptation, in a dedicated section and/or embedded throughout the document, including:

- An audit of climate change opportunities and risks in Halton Region;
- An overarching climate change adaptation vision and policy objectives;
- A comprehensive municipal risk assessment process to prioritise adaptation needs;
- A comprehensive climate change monitoring programme including climate change indicators and methods for collecting economic, social or environmental information relevant to the climate change adaptation in Halton.

The ROP should consider the impacts of a changing climate on municipal assets, such as roadside hardscapes, parkland and storm systems. This should be addressed in the ROP through a proactive strategy for adaptation and design using

best management practices, while acknowledging the significant fiscal and operational impacts for municipalities.

3. **Halton's population is forecast to grow to one million people and accommodate 470,000 jobs by 2041.**

**What do you think about policies to plan for climate change through more compact urban form and complete communities?**

**In your opinion, are we growing in the right direction?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

Achieving complete communities and reducing the need to travel to work requires an appropriate balance between housing and jobs. There is a need to address the disparity between the size, composition and skills of the workforce within Milton and the number and distribution of corresponding employment opportunities within the municipality by directing employment developments to areas of housing growth and vice versa.

Urban form and policy that supports transit and active transportation connectivity is important. Employment opportunities available via these connections is important to create a sustainable and complete community.

All levels of government need to recognize and commit to investing in infrastructure, facilities and services required to support the creation of complete communities, including transit, active transportation, schools and healthcare.

Achieving a more compact urban form needs to be supported by alternative 'compact urban' standards, including Regional roads, schools and green infrastructure. Equally, plans for a more compact urban form should not be at the expense of meeting community wellness, health and active living for all ages. This includes access to natural areas (passive) and programmed outdoor recreation (active, developable) which are fundamental land uses.

4. **What do you think the Region should do to help you reduce your greenhouse gas emissions? For example, if you typically commute by car to work or school every day, what would make you consider taking transit, biking or walking?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

Low carbon development and implementation at the community scale, as well as action by individuals, is needed in order to align emissions trends with achieving Ontario's 2050 target. The Regional Official Plan could help by providing a clear and consistent definition for net zero carbon communities with strategic level policy directions for their development.

Implementing new growth areas should have the lens of creating complete and walkable '15-minute' neighbourhoods. Growth areas should be phased and managed so that active transportation and transit services are well-connected and available as soon as possible for new residents, workers and schools.

Behavioral change at the level of the individual could be encouraged by making it easier to make sustainable choices that reduce their carbon footprint. For example, the Regional Official Plan could promote:

- Net zero buildings
- Renewable energy system and micro-grids
- Tree planting
- A reduce, re-use and recycle waste hierarchy
- Locally sourced and healthier food options
- Infrastructure to support electric vehicles and transit electrification
- Carbon off-setting

5. **Do you think the Region should encourage and support local renewable energy sources? If so, what should be considered?**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

Yes, the Region should accelerate Halton's transition to a low carbon Region. The Region should consider preparing a Community Energy and/or Climate Action Plan. For example, see Durham Community Energy Plan, 2019.

The delivery of on-site renewable energy systems should be incentivized through a streamlined approvals process.

6. **Can you provide examples of opportunities to address climate change as it relates to agriculture that you would like to see in Halton? .**

#### **MILTON RESPONSE**

Examples of opportunities to address climate change as it relates to agriculture include:

- Conserving water use through efficient irrigation management (e.g. drip irrigation and irrigation scheduling to reduce evapo-transpiration), capturing and storing water, growing more drought tolerant crops).
- On-farm renewable energy production such as using biogas and biomass to produce bio-energy.
- Organic farming practices and sustainable techniques.
- Supporting the process of carbon sequestration through land management practices, such as tree planting.

- Methane mitigation through holistic pasture based livestock management.

Lot control and severance policies should facilitate local 'grow your own' initiatives such as share farming, co-operatives, smallholdings, and community gardens.

7. **According to the Provincial Policy Statement, planning authorities are required to consider the potential impacts of climate change in increasing risks associated with natural hazards (e.g., fires and floods).**

**How can Regional Official Plan policies be enhanced to address climate change impacts on natural hazards?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

See Question 2 above.

8. **Are there additional measures the Regional Official Plan should include to improve air quality?**

**MILTON RESPONSE**

Prioritizing infrastructure to support zero emissions transportation choices, such as walking, cycling and electric vehicles.