



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report To:	Council
From:	Barbara Koopmans, Commissioner, Development Services
Date:	May 3, 2021
Report No:	DS-027-21
Subject:	Halton Region Official Plan Review - Milton's Response to Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 48.
Recommendation:	THAT staff be directed to submit comments as outlined in Report DS-027-21 to Halton Region in response to the Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 48, dated February 2021.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 48 was initiated through [Report No. LPS17-21](#) as endorsed by Council in February 2021. ROPA 48 advances select local municipal planning priorities related to urban structure and will provide important foundational policies to support Provincial objectives to increase housing supply and support growth and economic development in Halton.
- This report provides Milton's response to ROPA 48 for the consideration of Halton Region.

REPORT

Background

Regional Council directed Regional staff to prepare an initial scoped ROPA, under Section 26 of the *Planning Act* that would advance certain local municipal planning objectives. The draft ROPA 48 may be viewed as part of the Regional Council Meeting Agenda for February 17, 2021, as Attachment #1 to LPS17-21 at this link:

<https://edmweb.halton.ca/OnBaseAgendaOnline/Meetings/ViewMeeting?id=4196&doctype=1>

ROPA 48 (see map in Attachment 1) is proposing to advance the following key changes to the Regional Official Plan that align with and implement the Provincial Growth Plan:

- Adjustments to boundaries and policy changes to Urban Growth Centres (Burlington, Mid-Town Oakville, and Milton)

Background

- Delineation and assignment of density targets for Halton's Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs);
- Identification of additional growth nodes and strategic growth corridors with the corresponding policy framework; and
- Advancement of strategically important employment conversions to advance and support a mixed-use development approach.

ROPA 48 would implement an adjustment to the Burlington Urban Growth Centre designation that would identify the area around the Burlington GO MTSA as the Urban Growth Centre and primary growth node to stimulate growth and redevelopment of the MTSA as the focus of growth in the City of Burlington.

ROPA 48 contains key employment land conversions to support growth planning in Halton, in accordance with the Growth Plan, that can achieve economic development objectives in a changing economy. These include:

- lands within the Aldershot and Burlington GO MTSAs in Burlington;
- lands within the Acton GO and Guelph Street Corridor areas in Halton Hills;
- **lands within the Bronte/Main Street Corridor, the Meritor lands as well as the Milton Education Village (MEV) and Agerton areas in Milton; and**
- lands within the Palermo Village, the Hospital District and Trafalgar Corridor and a portion of the Bronte GO MTSA in Oakville.

Further to the above, it must be noted that Regional Report No. LPA17-21, as originally authored did not include Milton's most strategically important employment land conversions (Agerton and the MEV), despite Milton's repeated requests and supporting rationale. In light of this, a motion was tabled and approved at the Regional Council meeting held February 17, 2021 directing the following:

"THAT Regional staff be directed to include the southern portion of the Agerton Secondary Plan (lands south of hydro corridor) to facilitate the Major Transit Station Area and the southerly Milton Education Village employment land conversions as part of the draft "Regional Official Plan Amendment 48 - An Amendment to Define a Regional Urban Structure", attached to Report LPS17-21 and work with Town of Milton staff to frame the supporting rationale and basis for the inclusion of these lands prior to commencing the statutory public process and circulating the draft amendment to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing."

Background

“THAT given the changing nature of employment and the need to understand the role of employment in the mixed use growth nodes, request that Regional staff consider a policy which would allow for changes in the ratio between population and jobs within each of the growth nodes outside of municipal comprehensive reviews. A policy should allow for changes to capture the evolving nature of employment uses which are flexible and responsive to the market and which capture the contribution the mix of employment and residential uses which contribute to the vibrancy and success of the growth nodes.”

Given that draft ROPA 48 is part of a municipal comprehensive review as provided for in Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will be the approval authority for this amendment to the Regional Official Plan. **There is no ability to appeal the decision of the Minister. As such, it is imperative that Milton’s interests are addressed in this amendment.**

Discussion

At their meeting of February 17, 2021, Regional Council authorized Regional staff to release draft ROPA 48 for public engagement and to initiate the statutory public process required by the *Planning Act*.

This report is seeking direction to submit the following comments as Milton’s formal response to ROPA 48:

Rationale and Basis for the Inclusion of the MEV and Southern Agerton in ROPA 48

General comments:

- It is good planning to require that urban places be created to support and complement the significant investment in the MEV and the Trafalgar GO station in Agerton. Providing for an appropriately planned mix of housing and jobs together with complementary retail and services uses accomplishes this. This approach to planning will serve to increase the density of these areas and provide for a greater diversity of jobs in Milton as well as create an urban environment attractive to both employers and employees.
- The nature of planning for employment is aspirational and about creating the opportunity to attract employers. The employment planned for these areas includes new types of employment, which typically occur within urban or community areas as opposed to in more traditional employment areas on designated employment

lands. Once designated, the lands could accommodate all jobs immediately, although the timing for when they are realized cannot be predicted with the precision requested by the Region.

- The Town continues to strongly market itself, particularly through its economic development efforts to attract employers. These activities occur outside of the planning documents. Secondary Plans are land use planning documents that provide a policy framework to arrange land uses and comprehensively manage development in a manner that achieves densities and growth objectives.
- With regard to the MEV Secondary Plan, the vision includes a mix of uses across the entire MEV. **Maintaining the current Employment Area designations could allow warehousing and logistics at the MEV and would completely contradict Council's direction to develop the MEV as a complete community anchored by a strong post-secondary presence and innovation employment.**
- The Town is taking this one step at a time - securing the Trafalgar GO station is a major investment that will spark employment and population growth in this area of the Town. The intent is to create significant demand at this GO station that could help make two-way all-day GO service more viable. We need residents and jobs in that location to support the station. Mixed use is critical to the success of the proposed GO station (residential, office, and retail). **Warehousing and logistics type uses would not support the GO station.**
- Given the limited area and the attractiveness of mixed use developments resulting from the MEV and Agerton conversions, staff is of the opinion that the conversions will enhance the Town's and Region's ability to realize increased jobs in key sectors. Both the forecast need and requirement for employment lands and the types of jobs generated by more traditional employment uses should be considered overall through the Region's MCR process, along with updated Best Planning Estimates (BPEs).

Growth Plan Policies and Responses:

The Growth Plan allows the contemplation of employment land conversions subject to various tests. The following outlines how the proposed conversions of southern Agerton and the MEV meet these tests (responses are *bold italicized*):

- 2.2.5.9. The conversion of lands within *employment areas* to non-employment uses may be permitted only through a *municipal comprehensive review* where it is demonstrated that:
- a) there is a need for the conversion; ***Milton is directing growth to major investments which support the Town's urban structure and job creation***

objectives. These investments require additional uses to realize urban places which attract the right kind of employment uses.

- b) the lands are not required over the horizon of this Plan for the employment purposes for which they are designated; *The potential conversion equates to less than 20% of the Town's remaining vacant employment lands to 2031. The locations identified for conversion are not appropriate for the more traditional types of employment uses for which they are currently designated and are not anticipated to generate the number of jobs required to satisfy growth requirements. Moreover, there is a potential that additional employment lands will be required in more appropriate places to meet the forecasts to 2051.*
- c) the municipality will maintain sufficient employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth to the horizon of this Plan; *Assuming a density of 16-20 jobs per hectare, the Region would require approximately 1,850-2300 hectares of employment land to accommodate the 37,000 employment lands type jobs (industrial, warehousing and logistics) projected between 2021-2031. As measured in 2018, the Region has a supply of approximately 2,800 ha of vacant employment land. The conversion of 200 hectares will allow the Town and Region to maintain a sufficient supply of employment land within the horizon of the Plan.) This is consistent with the change in employment land type employment projections, where the updated projections for the Region to 2031 have a more than a 40,000 reduction in employment land types jobs in that timeframe for Halton Region (previously forecasted at 206,000 employment lands type jobs and now closer to 164,000 jobs.*
- d) the proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the *employment area* or the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan; *neither the MEV nor Agerton conversions will preclude the realization of employment lands type employment on adjacent lands, and as noted both will result in an increase in employment with higher densities. Through detailed secondary planning exercises, the Town has demonstrated that appropriate transitions can be incorporated which will maintain land use compatibility.*
- e) there are existing or planned *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* to accommodate the proposed uses. *Both the MEV and Agerton have planned infrastructure and public service facilities to accommodate the proposed uses, as demonstrated through the secondary plan processes.*

- 2.2.5.10 Notwithstanding policy 2.2.5.9, until the next *municipal comprehensive review*, lands within existing *employment areas* may be converted to a designation that permits non-employment uses, provided the conversion would:
- a) satisfy the requirements of policy 2.2.5.9 a), d) and e); *noted above*
 - b) maintain a significant number of jobs on those lands through the establishment of development criteria; *both the MEV and Agerton conversions will realize an increase in the number of jobs.*
 - c) not include any part of an *employment area* identified as a *provincially significant employment zone* unless the part of the *employment area* is located within a *major transit station area* as delineated in accordance with the policies in subsection 2.2.4. *Neither Agerton nor MEV are within a provincially significant employment zone.*

Additional General Comments on ROPA 48:

- While staff does not object to the concept of “Regional Nodes” and “Strategic Growth Areas” (SGAs), when located in greenfield locations (i.e. Trafalgar Secondary Plan, Agerton Secondary Plan, MEV Secondary Plan); the Region’s Official Plan should not define density and job targets. Rather, this should occur through the comprehensive Secondary Plan process undertaken at the local level. Any suggestion to set density and job targets in ROPA 48 should refer to “Area Specific Plans”. This will prevent conflicting policy while still providing specific targets, consistent with local urban structure plans, through a comprehensive process.
- Staff offers no concerns with the Minimum Density Targets proposed for Urban Growth Centres and Major Transit Station Areas since these are required by the 2019 Growth Plan, and are considered non-discretionary. Staff also supports the approach of allowing the Minimum Density Targets for other SGAs as required by the 2019 Growth Plan, to be informed by work conducted at the **local level**. However, Town staff has concerns with the proposed Target Proportion of Residents and Jobs and is of the opinion that these targets should be removed from draft ROPA 48.
- Staff is supportive of the proposed employment land conversions of the “Meritor Site” and “Bronte/Main Street Corridor”, as depicted in ROPA 48.
- While staff generally supports the delineation of Milton’s Major Transit Station Area at the Milton GO Station, as depicted in ROPA 48, staff requests that lands at 45 Bruce Street, the former site of a Milton Library also be included.

- Staff does not support the delineation of the Major Transit Station Area for Agerton (proposed Trafalgar GO Station) at this stage. This should be defined and informed through the comprehensive Secondary Plan process.
- Subject to the population and employment targets being defined at the local level through an “Area Specific Plan” and not through the Region’s Official Plan, staff supports the identification of Trafalgar Road as a “Regional Corridor”.
- The Milton Mobility Hub Study Demonstration Plan has a projected density of 221 persons per hectare. This is based on 25,114 residents and 4,137 jobs. The proportion of residents and jobs is 85% and 15% respectively. There was estimated to be 2,971 existing jobs in the area. ROPA 48 must be revised accordingly to reflect this.
- With respect to new policy 78.1 - What do a “significant proportion of” and “certain types of” mean? Suggest revising this to read: “To promote population and employment growth within Strategic Growth Areas”.
- With respect to new policy 78.1 - How does the Regional Urban Structure provide “increased opportunities”? We suggest deleting this to read: “To provide for the development of Affordable Housing”.
- With respect to new policy 79.3(12) - This is based on the land use compatibility policy in the Provincial Policy Statement which refers to major facilities - not major employment uses. Major facilities is a defined term and should be used here.
- With respect to new policy 79.3(13) - This is based on 2.2.5.14 of the Growth Plan. But, notably, the words “site-specific” have been added. There may be circumstances where we would want flexibility to consider the transfer of employment from one site to another in the same ownership. For example, the phased redevelopment of the Milton Mall may involve relocating jobs from one development site to another site.
- With respect to new policy 79.3(13)(v) - This proposed policy could stifle development and intensification and should be removed.

Next Steps:

Regional Council will be notified when dates for the Open House/Public Information Centre and statutory public meeting have been confirmed. Public notification of these engagement opportunities will be provided through the Region’s website, newspaper advertisements, mailing lists, social media, stakeholder groups, and other means.



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Town staff anticipates that the earliest opportunity for a Statutory Public Meeting on Draft ROPA 48 will be June 2021.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications from this report. However, the implementation of the Region's ultimate growth management strategy - through regional and local official plan amendments will impact the financing and delivery of municipal programs and services.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Koopmans, MPA, MCIP, RPP, CMO
Commissioner, Planning and Development

For questions, please contact: Jill Hogan, MCIP, RPP Phone: Ext. 2304

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Draft ROPA 48 Map 1H

CAO Approval
Andrew M. Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer

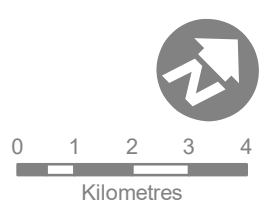
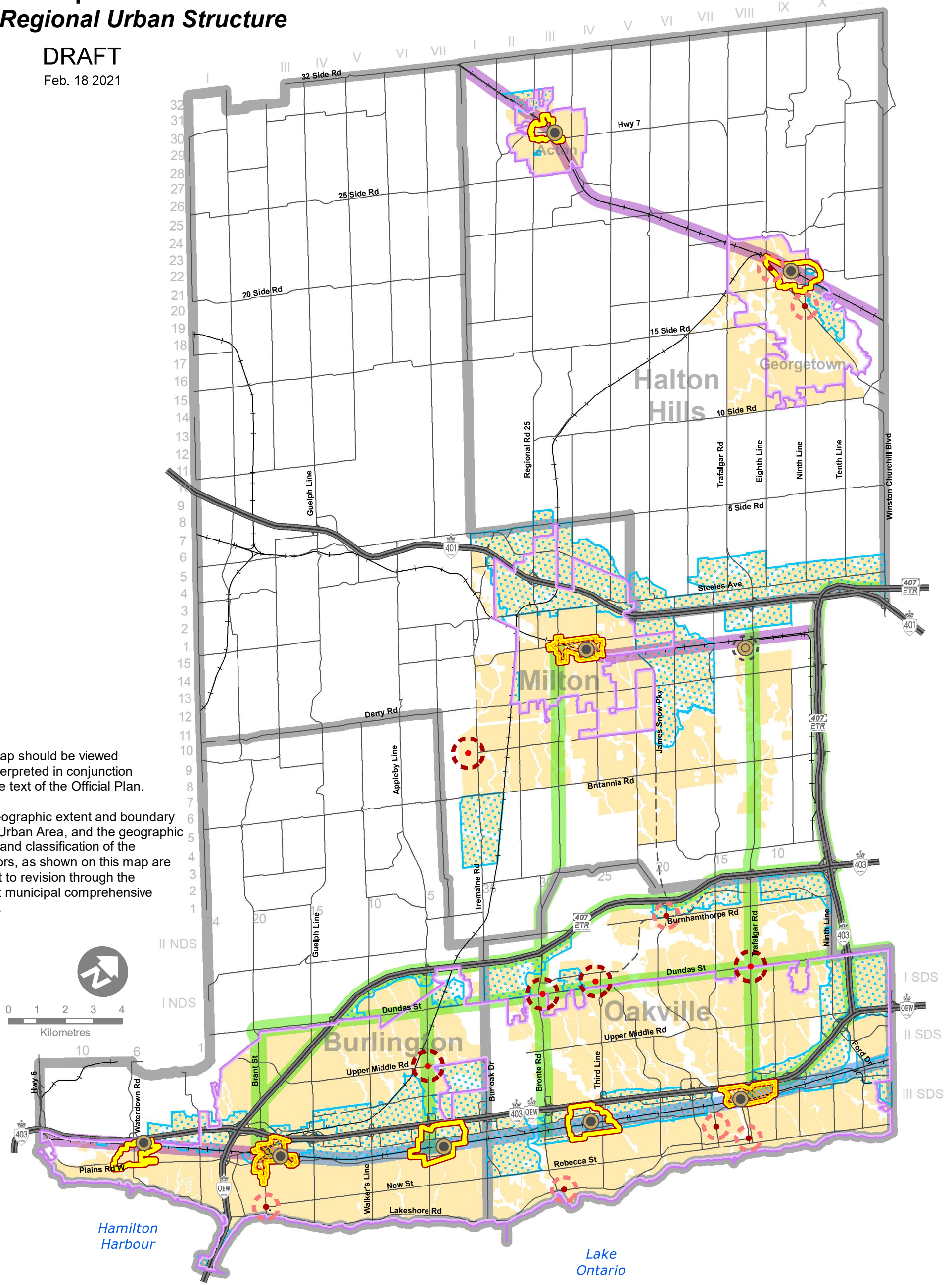
Map 1h Regional Urban Structure



















DRAFT

Feb. 18 2021

This map should be viewed and interpreted in conjunction with the text of the Official Plan.

The geographic extent and boundary of the Urban Area, and the geographic extent and classification of the Corridors, as shown on this map are subject to revision through the current municipal comprehensive review.



-  Major Transit Station
-  Proposed Major Transit Station
-  Rail Line
-  Proposed Major Arterial
-  Major Road
-  Provincial Freeway
-  Urban Area
-  Built Boundary
-  Employment Area
-  Higher Order Transit Corridor
-  Commuter Rail Corridor
-  Priority Transit Corridor
-  Lot and Concession Line
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Urban Growth Centre
-  Major Transit Station Area (MTSA)
-  Primary Regional Nodes
-  Secondary Regional Nodes