



SUBJECT: Submission on Region of Halton's Official Plan Discussion Papers

TO:Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Cttee.-PM

FROM:Community Planning Department

Report Number: PL-28-20

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 150-14

Date to Committee: September 22, 2020

Date to Council: September 28, 2020

Recommendation:

Direct the Director of Community Planning to submit the appendices to Community Planning Department report PL-28-20 as the City of Burlington Submission on the Region of Halton's Official Plan Discussion Papers by the comment submission deadline of September 28, 2020; and

Direct the Director of Community Planning to provide any additional comments to the Region, if any, upon Council approval on September 28, 2020.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Improve integrated city mobility
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment

Background and Discussion:

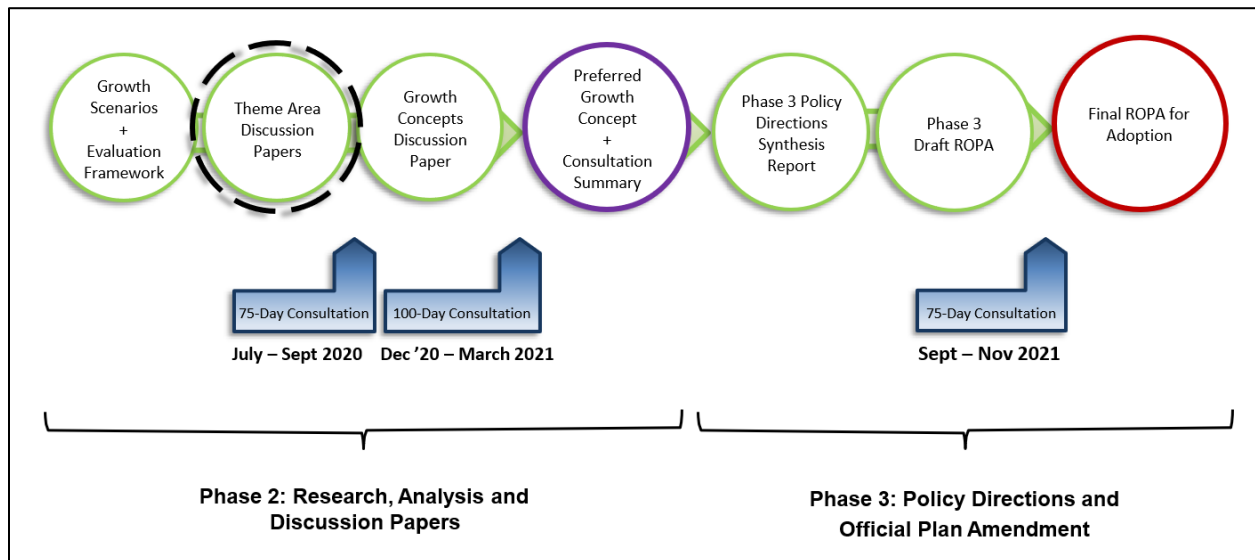
Under the *Planning Act*, municipalities are required to have an official plan and to update that official plan on a regular basis. The Halton Region Official Plan (ROP) is an important document that guides decisions related to growth, development and community investment across Halton Region.

The Planning Act requires municipal official plans to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2019) and to conform to applicable Provincial Plans. In Halton, this includes the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and applicable Source Protection Plans.

The Halton Region Official Plan provides a strong planning vision that sees Halton's future landscape consisting of identifiable settlement areas, a rural countryside, and a natural heritage system.

Regional Official Plan Review

In April 2014, through Report No. LPS28-14, Regional Council authorized the commencement of a statutory five-year review of the Halton Region Official Plan, referred to as the Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR). Regional staff developed a Work Plan, Communications and Engagement Strategy, and Directions Report to guide the ROPR through Report No. LPS110-16 which was delivered to Regional Council in October 2016. The Directions Report was the culmination of Phase 1 of the ROPR and identified a high-level work plan for subsequent phases.



Current ROPR Status

The Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) is currently in Phase 2 focused on research, analysis and a set of Discussion Papers on five key theme areas. The Discussion Papers explore issues and present options for achieving conformity with Provincial direction:

Regional Urban Structure (Integrated Growth Management Strategy): Urban system and growth management policies to guide population and job growth.

Rural and Agricultural System: Agricultural policies to support the agricultural system in Halton.

Natural Heritage: Natural heritage system policies to preserve the natural environment and protect source water.

Climate Change: Land-use policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

North Aldershot Planning Area: Implications of growth management, natural heritage and a rural and agricultural system in North Aldershot.

Halton Region released the Discussion Papers for consultation in late July with a 75-day consultation period ending on September 28, 2020. Public engagement included Virtual Public Information Centres, materials at community centres, stakeholder meetings, meetings with the Region's Advisory Committees presentations to Regional Council and Local Councils as well as online general and technical questionnaires.

All input received through public engagement on the Discussion Papers will be presented to Regional Council in a consultation summary report.

Input received on the Urban Structure Discussion paper will also be used in refining the four growth concepts that are anticipated to be brought forward to Regional Council in Q4 2020 in the form of a Growth Concepts Discussion Paper, which will then be released for public consultation.

Feedback received on the Discussion Papers and Landing Pages will also be used to determine policy directions that will be presented to Regional Council in advance of the preparation of any amendment(s) to the Regional Official Plan.

Phase 3 of the Regional Official Plan review (2021) will involve the preparation and finalizing of a Regional Official Plan Amendment(s) and there will be additional opportunities for public engagement during this phase of the process.

Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan (2019)

On August 28, 2020, Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan came into force and effect along with a new Land Needs Assessment Methodology. Updates to the Growth Plan include new population and employment forecasts for Halton Region to the 2051 planning horizon. Despite the recent changes, the Region has indicated that the information provided in the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper and Landing Page are still informative for the purposes of public consultation on a proposed Regional Urban Structure and relevant to the ongoing Integrated Growth Management Strategy process. Furthermore, Halton Region has advised that changes to the Growth Plan through Amendment 1 and the new Land Needs Assessment methodology will be addressed

through the next stages of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy through the development of Growth Concepts.

1.0 Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS) Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper

To effectively manage and guide growth and development in the Region, the Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS) is a critical component of the ROPR. The Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper is the second in a series of four IGMS reports and outlines the policy context and requirements in the Growth Plan, 2019, and the development of a proposed Regional Urban Structure to guide future growth and development.

The discussion paper outlines the policy and technical requirements for the Region's Community Areas, the Employment Areas and the Settlement Areas, where growth and development are to be directed. Identifying these elements of the proposed Regional Urban Structure will provide important inputs for the development of Growth Concepts in the next stage of the IGMS leading to the development of a Preferred Growth Concept for Halton.

Community Areas are the focus for population and population-related and office employment growth.

The key components of the Regions Urban Structure include:

- Settlement Area
 - Community Areas
 - Delineated Built-up Areas
 - Strategic Growth Areas: are places where population and employment intensification will be directed.
 - Urban Growth Centres (UGCs)
 - Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)
 - Corridors and other Strategic Growth Areas
 - Designated Greenfield Area.
 - Employment Areas

1.1 Urban Growth Centres

Urban Growth Centres are focal points for institutional, commercial, recreational, employment and residential uses in the Region to accommodate and support major transit infrastructure. The Growth Plan (2019) provides strong policy direction for the development of these areas including a minimum density target of 200 residents and jobs combined per gross hectare to be met by 2031 or earlier.

Currently Downtown Burlington is identified as a UGC in the Regional Official Plan. However, the Discussion Paper acknowledges that Burlington Council has asked Burlington Planning staff to prepare a report to consider changes to the UGC, and once received by the Region, this Local Municipal input will be considered as appropriate through the IGMS process.

Staff note that in the Council approved staff report [PL-33-20](#), the following staff recommendations were approved:

- Request the Region of Halton, through its Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan, to adjust the boundary of the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre to generally align with the lands in proximity to the Burlington GO Station; and
- Direct the Director of Community Planning to provide all related planning studies and background information to the Region to support the adjustment of the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre boundary; and
- Direct the Director of Community Planning to work with the Region of Halton through its Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan to remove the Major Transit Station Area designation from the downtown and delineate the boundaries of all other Major Transit Station Areas in Burlington; and
- Direct the Director of Community Planning to work with the Region of Halton to implement a staged approval of its Municipal Comprehensive Review of their Official Plan through Section 26 of the *Ontario Planning Act* to prioritize the above issues; and
- Request Provincial support of the Region of Halton Municipal Comprehensive Review of its Official Plan, including the adjustment of the boundary of the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre and make all necessary modifications to Provincial mapping in order to ensure all amendments are in conformity with the Growth Plan; and
- Direct the Director of Community Planning to prepare the appropriate amendments to the City of Burlington Official Plan upon Provincial approval of the Region of Halton Municipal Comprehensive Review of its Official Plan to remove the Major Transit Station Area designation in the downtown and to reflect the adjusted boundary of the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre; and
- Direct the Director of Community Planning to provide an engagement plan with residents, businesses and community stakeholders to Council with respect to the proposed adjustment of the downtown Urban Growth Corridor and Major Transit Station Area to satisfy the regulatory and Region requirements at the September 15, 2020 Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Committee meeting.

As noted in Appendix A, the City requests the Region of Halton through its Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan, to adjust the boundary of the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre to generally align with the lands in proximity to the Burlington GO Station.

1.2 Major Transit Station Areas

The Growth Plan requires Halton Region, in consultation with Local Municipalities, to delineate the boundaries of MTSA's on Priority Transit Corridors and identify a minimum density target. In the Discussion Paper, the Region provides Proposed Major Transit Station Area Boundaries for the areas around the Aldershot GO Station, Burlington GO Station and Appleby GO Station. The current ROP simply identifies Major Transit Stations as point features on Map 1 – Regional Structure. The Region is also considering the potential use of Inclusionary Zoning in MTSA's to ensure the provision of affordable housing is being considered as part of the ROPR.

The IGMS will consider using the Protected MTSA tool to assist in delivering needed intensification and the ROPR is reviewing currently identified MTSA's based on their role and level of transit service. The Protected Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) is a municipal tool used to support Higher Order Transit infrastructure around Major Transit Station Areas. The tool restricts appeals of Protected MTSA when a municipality establishes the required official plan policies (i.e. transit-supportive densities and uses).

Staff is of the opinion that all of the GO Station MTSA's should be Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSA's) under the Growth Plan.

With regards to Downtown Burlington, staff have no concerns with the Region's proposal to remove the Downtown Burlington MTSA/Mobility Hub from the ROP as permitted by the Province. This aligns with the following Council approved staff recommendation (PL-33-20):

- Direct the Director of Community Planning to prepare the appropriate amendments to the City of Burlington Official Plan upon Provincial approval of the Region of Halton Municipal Comprehensive Review of its Official Plan to remove the Major Transit Station Area designation in the downtown and to reflect the adjusted boundary of the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre.

Staff note that the proposed MTSA boundaries for Burlington GO and Appleby GO vary slightly from the Mobility Hubs study area boundaries that have been used as part of the City's Mobility Hubs Area-Specific Plan project since 2017. These variations relate primarily to the exclusion of parkland and the inclusion of a site that, while not well-connected to the area, may support change and development and therefore could contribute to the achievement of a density target.

The proposed MTSA boundary for Aldershot GO has the most differences from the City's Mobility Hub boundary for Aldershot GO. The key changes in the Region's proposed Aldershot GO MTSA boundary are the exclusion of Grove Park, Aldershot

Park and the properties located at 1135 Gallagher Road and 1200 King Road. Staff note that the lands at 1200 King Road are addressed in Minutes of Settlement between the City and the owner of those lands, Paletta International Corporation. The City agreed, through the Minutes of Settlement, to conduct a review to determine whether the portion of the 1200 King Road lands located west of Falcon Creek should be developed with MTSA land uses. That review, which includes a natural heritage component, has not yet been completed. City staff await a response from the Province respecting the natural heritage review that has been completed for these lands. Once received, the City will consider the Province's comments and conclude its review. The Region has noted that the proposed Aldershot GO MTSA boundary as presented in the IGMS Discussion Paper is consistent with the Region's delineation methodology to follow the Natural Heritage System (NHS) boundary.

1.3 Corridors and other Strategic Growth Areas

The Region is examining the identification of corridors as part of a proposed Regional Urban Structure, and whether minimum density targets should be assigned to corridors which have a strategic function, and if other corridors should be identified that have a transit function. The Region is also examining whether the ROP should identify other growth nodes, including certain nodes identified in Local Urban Structures, and if additional multi-purpose or minor arterial roads should be identified in the Regional Urban Structure to support a higher-order regional transit network.

The City of Burlington has concerns with the identified network as contained in the Defining Major Transit Requirements (DMTR) Study and refers the Region to local municipal work to inform corridors. The focus should be placed on the local vision for corridors, as contained in City's Adopted Official Plan on the Frequent Transit Network schedule. Local transit investment including increased transit frequency has already been implemented on these corridors to align with the municipality's local urban structure.

The City of Burlington may also have concerns with the establishment of minimum density targets along corridors. The Region should carefully consider the role of establishing new density targets beyond those already established in the Provincial Growth Plan. It is requested that the Region investigate the role of targets for corridors but that due consideration be given to the implementation of such targets.

The City of Burlington advises that establishing a target along corridors should be at the discretion of the local municipality, particularly given the perceived relative importance of achieving targets during the evaluation of development applications. A target along narrow expanses of areas that will develop over a long period of time could mean that the targets unintentionally distort the good planning principles behind identifying these areas as Strategic Growth Areas. Careful consideration of this direction is required.

1.4 Employment Areas

Employment Areas are the focus for clusters of business and economic activities and accommodate most employment land employment.

The Growth Plan, 2019 requires Halton Region, in consultation with Local Municipalities, to designate Employment Areas in official plans to protect them for appropriate employment uses over the long-term. Halton Region is required to plan to accommodate 470,000 jobs by 2041. As the discussion paper notes “the Community Area and in particular the Strategic Growth Areas will accommodate a large share of this growth, Employment Areas continue to play a strong role in supporting Halton’s economic growth and competitiveness.”

This section of the Discussion Paper focuses on considering which lands within Halton Region should be protected as Employment Areas and how the policy framework in the Regional Official Plan can best support planning for employment in Halton to 2041.

The Region must designate sufficient land as Employment Area as per the Growth Plan, 2019 and establish minimum employment density targets for these areas.

The Province has also identified Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZs) within Halton Region for the purpose of long-term planning for job creation and economic development. The Region is considering alternative policy approaches to the planning for Employment Areas, given broader economic trends.

The Discussion Papers identify a range of issues to be tackled in refining the existing employment policy framework in the Region’s Official Plan. In many cases it is important to note that there are a wide range of issues that are not necessarily influenced by policy. The City of Burlington encourages the Region to set the stage in policy to look for other means to support the policy directions with new tools and programs to reinforce employment policies and to support employment growth within key Strategic Growth Areas.

Although the discussion paper is focused on a few key areas staff look forward to the opportunity to continue to work with the Region in the development of the policy approaches laid out in the discussion paper.

1.4.1 Employment Conversions

Halton Region is evaluating requests to convert lands within Employment Areas to recognize or allow for non-employment uses such as residential, major retail or other mixed uses. To date, the Region has received 46 requests to remove a total of approximately 1,030 hectares of lands from the Region’s Employment Area. The employment conversion principles are well described and the underlying assessment considerations are a good starting point for the consideration of employment conversions. As noted above, given the recent amendments to the Growth Plan criteria

that reference the 2041 planning horizon must be revised. Staff look forward to discussions about how the assessment considerations will be impacted by the new planning horizon.

The employment area conversions criteria are well laid out. Staff are supportive of the identified subjects and principles set out in the criteria. The various assessment considerations will provide enough information about how each conversion requests contributes to a given principle. Staff continue to identify that there may be nuances within the assessment considerations where one or more may be required in order to support meeting the identified principle.

The City of Burlington continues to support the listing of properties recommended to be considered for conversion at the time of the adoption of the Official Plan (2018) in PB-04-18 titled Revised Proposed New Official Plan Recommended for Adoption. [Appendix D to PB-04-18](#) which is titled Lands Recommended for Employment Conversion includes properties that are located within the Region of Halton Employment Area overlay. The list of conversion requests included in the discussion paper includes 901 Guelph Line which was considered for conversion by the City, however, was ultimately not recommended for conversion through the adopted Official Plan in 2018.

Staff look forward to the opportunity to considering the full listing of employment conversion requests compiled after the submission deadline against the employment area conversions criteria.

The delineation of the MTSAs and any other Strategic Growth Areas should occur in advance of any decisions on the conversion requests to inform the conversion assessment considerations. The determination of the Regional Urban Structure should be appropriately informed by the Local Urban Structures. In turn, this should be in place to inform conversion recommendations.

The City of Burlington is supportive of the work undertaken by the Region to consider technical revisions to the existing Region of Halton Employment Area. These changes will support better interpretation of the policies of the Regional Official Plan by establishing boundaries that are clear, consistent and logical.

1.4.2 Employment Area Additions

In answering the question of what lands should be protected as Employment Area the discussion paper highlights the consideration of adding land to the Employment Area designated in the Regional Official Plan. Burlington staff agree that not all lands that accommodate employment uses need to identified within an Employment Area.

At the time of the adoption of the Official Plan (2018) the Urban Structure schedule identified a set of lands “to be added to Region of Halton Employment Area”. Please find attached as Appendix B – Schedule B: Urban Structure which presents the areas that, at the time, were identified.

With respect to the adopted Official Plan (2018), Regional and City staff continue to address issues of conformity with the Regional Official Plan, and changes to the Growth Plan in the intervening period.

The City of Burlington supports the approach of working closely with the Region to refine the extent of the areas previously identified as “to be added to the Region of Halton Employment Area”. Refinement of the area may occur as a result of the approval process for the City of Burlington’s adopted Official Plan (2018).

1.5 Settlement Areas

Settlement areas are the Region’s urban areas and rural settlement areas. The Growth Plan, 2019 requires municipalities to plan for the population and employment forecasts by directing the vast majority of growth to Settlement Areas, which have a Delineated Built-up Area, existing or planned municipal infrastructure and can support the development of Complete Communities.

The Growth Plan, 2019 requires municipalities to delineate the Settlement Areas within their Official Plans and through the completion of a Land Needs Assessment, the Region will determine if an expansion to the Settlement Area boundaries is required to accommodate the forecasted growth. Should an expansion be required, the Growth Plan, 2019 provides criteria on the feasibility and most appropriate location for a Settlement Area boundary expansion. The IGMS Growth Scenarios Report released in June 2019 identified potential locations for new Community Areas and Employment Area Designated Greenfield Areas. The Region is also required to establish a minimum density target for the Designated Greenfield Area of Halton.

2.0 Rural and Agricultural Systems

The purpose of the Rural and Agricultural Systems Discussion Paper is to identify the key agricultural and rural policy areas that will need to be investigated further through the ROPR process. A technical background review was conducted to review:

- key Regional and Provincial documents that may have an impact on land use in the rural and agricultural areas;
- best practices related to rural and agricultural land use; and
- review proposed prime agricultural mapping.

2.1 Mapping

The Discussion Paper includes the implementation of the Growth Plan Provincial Agricultural System policies and mapping, including the expansion of the agricultural system concept to include the ‘agri-food network’ in addition to a physical land base.

The Discussion Paper also provides Agricultural System mapping options such as an overlay vs. designation, which ties into the Natural Heritage mapping discussion.

As noted in Appendix A, staff are supportive of an approach that includes mutually exclusive designations for prime agricultural lands and key features of the Natural Heritage System where the majority of agricultural uses are not permitted, with a single constraint overlay for the remainder of the Natural Heritage System. Staff recognize the complexities associated with a single constraint layer, given the variations in permitted uses across the numerous policy frameworks governing the Natural Heritage System, but recommends addressing these nuances through policy and supplementary mapping. However, given the restrictions associated with key features and the resultant impacts to the agricultural sector, careful consideration must be given to mapping and refinement approaches through further consultation with the agricultural community.

2.2 Agriculture-related and On-Farm Diversified Uses

With respect to agriculture-related uses, the Discussion Paper introduces new permitted uses within prime agricultural areas, aligned with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), 2020. There is consideration of whether the Region should provide guidance/policies to regulate these uses or leave it to local discretion.

The PPS, 2020 introduced two new sets of permissions for prime agricultural areas called 'agriculture-related uses' and 'on-farm diversified uses. Agriculture related uses are farm-related commercial and industrial uses. They add to the vitality and economic viability of prime agricultural areas because they are directly related to and service farm operations in the area as a primary activity. These uses may be located on farms or on separate agriculture-related commercial or industrial properties. Examples include abattoirs, storage facilities, farmers markets, farm suppliers and food processors. On-farm diversified uses enable farm operators to diversify and supplement their farm income, as well as to accommodate value-added and agri-tourism uses. These uses must be located on a farm that is actively in agricultural use and must be secondary in nature to the principal agricultural operation. Examples include retail uses, bed and breakfasts, special events, wineries, home occupations and home industries.

As noted in Appendix A, it is staff recommendation that the full extent of these uses be permitted within the Regional Official Plan and that the Provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas be encouraged as a common basis/minimum requirement for developing detailed implementation policies at the local level.

2.3 Cemeteries

The Rural and Agricultural Systems Discussion Paper considers how to respond to cemetery applications in prime agricultural areas. Currently the PPS 2020 permits cemeteries in settlement areas and rural areas that are outside prime agricultural areas, with a process to allow municipalities to consider permitting cemeteries in prime agricultural areas only if strict tests are met.

Regarding both Urban and Rural Areas, staff suggest that policies should be examined for opportunities to better incorporate planning for long-term cemetery needs as a component of complete communities, supported by a comprehensive cemetery land needs analysis. Staff are not supportive of locating cemeteries in prime agricultural areas and recommend incorporating additional policies to guide the evaluation of non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas, based on the Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas. In addition, policies encouraging and supporting the upgrading and renewal of existing cemeteries to extend capacity should be considered. The relationship between cemeteries and the natural heritage system, park lands and public space should also be evaluated to identify innovative and emerging opportunities to address the challenges associated with cemetery needs and limited land supply.

2.4 Agricultural Impact Assessment

Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) policies are reviewed in the Discussion Paper as there is an opportunity to add AIA requirements to existing policies to better align with recent updated Provincial requirements. Staff recommend re-consideration of the need for separate Regional guidelines once the draft Provincial guidelines have been finalized. Staff also recommend establishing a better understanding of what constitutes agricultural viability within the context of Halton Region and establishing metrics to enhance the effectiveness of AIA requirements, with a focus on mitigation measures.

2.5 Special Needs Housing

The Discussion Paper also considers how to respond to applications for special needs housing in the rural area. The current ROP does not contemplate special needs housing in the rural area, yet the PPS 2020 does not restrict special needs housing to urban areas only. The Discussion Paper highlights the need to carefully consider the addition of policies to permit this use in the rural area.

To help meet housing needs in Halton, staff are generally supportive of special needs housing outside of the urban area, where residential uses are permitted (in accordance with Provincial policy), provided that health, safety and other reasonable planning standards are met (i.e. adequacy of servicing, provision of parking, etc.).

3.0 Natural Heritage

The Discussion Paper describes the Natural Heritage System as having a central place within the planning vision for Halton. This vision includes sustainable development to protect the natural environment, preserving certain landscapes permanently and strengthening the long-term viability of Halton's natural heritage and water resources.

3.1 Natural Heritage System Mapping

The discussion paper addresses the update of Regional Natural Heritage System (NHS) base layers and implementation of Growth Plan Provincial Natural Heritage System policies and mapping. As part of these updates, new Provincial buffer requirements and vegetation protection zones have been added in certain areas.

As noted in Appendix A, staff are supportive of an approach that includes mutually exclusive designations for prime agricultural lands and key features of the Natural Heritage System where the majority of agricultural uses are not permitted, with a single constraint overlay for the remainder of the Natural Heritage System. Staff recognize the complexities associated with a single constraint layer, given the variations in permitted uses across the numerous policy frameworks governing specific components of the Natural Heritage System, but recommends addressing these nuances through policy and supplementary mapping. However, given the restrictions associated with key features and the resultant impacts to the agricultural sector, careful consideration must be given to mapping and refinement approaches through further consultation with the agricultural community.

3.2 Water Resource System

Currently, ROP policies highlight the overall objective of maintaining, protecting and enhancing the quality and quantity of ground water and surface water. In alignment with the PPS 2020, Growth Plan 2019 and Greenbelt Plan 2017, the Discussion Paper introduces a Water Resource System to provide for the long-term protection of key hydrologic features, key hydrologic areas and their functions. Staff are supportive of integrating Water Resource System and Natural Heritage System mapping in areas where they overlap/share common policy objectives but recommend policies to distinguish slight differences between Key Natural Heritage Features and Key Hydrologic Features, along with separate mapping for Key Hydrologic Areas.

3.3 Natural Heritage Strategy

The Discussion Paper considers the development of a Regional Natural Heritage Strategy to support the objectives of the NHS to increase the certainty that the biological diversity and ecological functions within Halton will be preserved and enhanced for future generations.

Staff support the development of a Regional Natural Heritage Strategy and have provided suggestions on what should be included, such as the identification of critical areas for enhancement and securement efforts within the Region, with specific recommendations for actions and appropriate funding mechanisms.

3.4 Other Natural Heritage Topics

The Discussion Paper explores a number of other topics including the inclusion of supporting objectives/policies linking to the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System Master Plans, incorporating Source Protection Plans into ROP land use policies and mapping, and incorporating updated provincial policies regarding natural hazards. Lastly, the paper considers strengthening policies for significant woodlands based on additional factors such as the quality of the woodland and its ecological functions, focusing on complete life cycle analysis.

4.0 North Aldershot

The North Aldershot Discussion Paper reviews the implications of growth management, natural heritage and a rural and agricultural system in North Aldershot. This area has a long history as a distinct policy area within the ROP and, given that the framework has not been updated since 1996, a comprehensive review is required.

The North Aldershot policy area is no longer in conformity with the Provincial framework and must be brought into one of three permitted land use categories under the PPS: urban 'settlement area', 'prime agricultural area' or 'rural area'. Rural areas include rural settlement areas, rural lands, prime agricultural areas, natural heritage features and areas and resource areas. Rural lands and prime agricultural areas are mutually exclusive, with rural lands not encompassing prime agricultural areas. North Aldershot is outside of existing urban settlement area boundaries, it has not been identified as a rural settlement area, and it does not contain any prime agricultural lands.

On this basis, Regional analysis has concluded that 'rural area' is the applicable land use category, unless a settlement area boundary expansion were to occur through a Municipal Comprehensive Review. Further, the Discussion Paper gives consideration to what types of uses should be permitted under a possible rural lands designation.

From a policy perspective, staff are supportive of the Region's conclusions regarding the appropriate land use category for lands within North Aldershot that are not the subject of existing development approvals or Minutes of Settlement that contemplate potential residential development. Specifically, Minutes of Settlement between the City and Paletta International Corporation regarding Paletta's Eagle Heights lands within North Aldershot recognize Eagle Heights as an approved residential development. Paletta is also seeking to amend its approved development to permit a revised development form. The Minutes of Settlement confirm that the City is supportive of the proposed revised development provided that it is in accordance with the Minutes of Settlement and complies with all applicable law, policies and regulations. Based on current Provincial and Regional policies, as well as existing settlement area boundaries, the City is supportive of permitted uses in keeping with Provincial policies for the applicable land use category for the remainder of the lands within North Aldershot. Staff acknowledge that any consideration of a Settlement Area boundary expansion within the North Aldershot Planning Area must occur within the context of the IGMS and

be based on the Growth Plan (2019) policy tests for settlement boundary expansions and the results of the Land Needs Assessment.

5.0 Climate Change

The Region is reviewing land-use policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. The Climate Change Discussion Paper summarizes the key findings of background research and analysis and identifies the principal areas where the ROPR could address climate change and outlines potential policy considerations for the ROP. The review offers the opportunity to build on the sustainability vision of the current ROP in the following policy areas:

5.1 Growth Management

In order to strengthen the Region's ability to grow in a compact manner, and promote complete and resilient communities, a climate change lens must be applied to growth management to ensure the Region's growth does not translate into higher GHG emissions.

5.2 Transportation

The discussion paper highlights the importance of aligning growth and transportation planning at the early stages by assigning growth in a way that supports transit. Further, the implementation of complete streets will allow the Region to put greater emphasis on increasing its mode share towards transit and active transportation and reducing auto-dependence.

5.3 Energy and Utilities

The Region is also looking to explore ways to enhance and strengthen energy conservation policies and introduce policies related to renewable energy.

5.4 Agriculture

The discussion paper emphasizes the linkages between agricultural sector viability, on-farm diversification and resilience to the impacts of changing climate in relation to economic resilience and food security in Halton Region.

5.5 Natural Heritage and Environmental Quality

The discussion paper recognizes the Natural Heritage System (NHS) as a valuable carbon sink and seeks to improve policies related to water, air and hazardous lands protection.

Submission

Please find attached Appendix A, the City's Submission to Region of Halton on the Regional Official Plan Discussion Papers and Appendix B – Schedule B: Urban Structure. Appendix C, the Burlington Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee (BARAAC) Submission on the Regional Official Plan Discussion Papers, will be distributed under separate cover, in advance of the Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee meeting.

Strategy/process

The City of Burlington is providing the City's submission on the Region's Official Plan Discussion papers through staff report PL-28-20 during the 75-day consultation period as the City's input into Phase 2 of the Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR).

Options Considered

Not applicable.

Financial Matters:

Not applicable.

Total Financial Impact

Not applicable.

Source of Funding

Not applicable.

Other Resource Impacts

Not applicable.

Climate Implications

Not applicable.

Engagement Matters:

Staff held two internal virtual workshops with staff from various departments and the Burlington Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) to gather feedback on the five Discussion Papers.

A newsletter containing information about the ROPR process, the five discussion papers and the consultation period was sent out through Get Involved and through Constant Contact to the Official Plan mailing list.

Further, staff have worked with the Burlington Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee (BARAAC) to collect feedback on the Discussion Papers. Due to timing constraints and the advisory committee summer break, the BARAAC was not able to provide formal comments for inclusion at the time of report submission. BARAAC's preliminary feedback has been considered throughout staff comments, but the committee's formal submission will be distributed under separate cover as Appendix C in September, once advisory committee activities have resumed.

Conclusion:

The Region of Halton's Official Plan Discussion Papers cover several important topics. The City of Burlington's comments and suggestions on these topics, as well as answers to the Discussion Questions contained in the Discussion Papers have been provided in staff report PL-28-20 and the attached appendices, which form the City's submission to the Region of Halton.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosa Bustamante

Manager of Mobility Hubs

Appendices:

- A. Appendix A – City of Burlington Submission on the Regional Official Plan Review Discussion Papers
- B. Appendix B – Schedule B: Urban Structure
- C. Appendix C – Burlington Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee (BARAAC) Submission on the Regional Official Plan Discussion Papers (to be distributed under separate cover).

Notifications:

Region of Halton
Town of Oakville
Town of Milton
Town of Halton Hills
Conservation Halton
Credit Valley Conservation
Grand River Conservation Authority

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Council.