



REPORT

Midtown Oakville

Meeting Date: January 30, 2024

FROM: Planning Services Department

DATE: January 23, 2024

SUBJECT: **Midtown Program – Proposed Land Use Concept**

LOCATION: Midtown Oakville

WARD: Town-wide

RECOMMENDATION

That the report entitled “Midtown Program – Proposed Land Use Concept” be received for information.

KEY FACTS

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting #6 on January 30, 2024 will provide:
 - A summary of engagement from Public Information Centre (PIC) #2; and
 - A proposed land use concept and policy directions, refined based on the feedback received through public, stakeholder and Council engagement to date.
- An updated Committee of the Whole – Midtown Oakville tracking tool is attached to this report (Appendix A) and is available on the town’s website: www.oakville.ca/midtown. The updated tool reflects progress since the last Committee of the Whole meeting #5 on December 12, 2023.

BACKGROUND

Since the first Committee of the Whole meeting on July 18, 2023, the consulting team – *Jacobs* – has continued to work through a new Midtown Oakville Official Plan Amendment (OPA) and implementation program. Between September and December 2023, there has been numerous public engagement opportunities to gather feedback from various stakeholders. More than eight engagements with the public, technical experts, developers, landowners, and Residents Associations have taken place to discuss different land use objectives as well as draft block concepts.

The draft block concepts were evaluated in consideration of the effect on servicing, mobility, public realm, precinct strategies and built form. A third phase of engagement with stakeholders, developers and landowners and the public is planned following the Committee of the Whole meeting #6 to receive feedback on the proposed concept.

The Committee of the Whole meeting #5 on December 12th provided an overview of Ontario's planning tools, positioning the Midtown Oakville OPA within the broader land use planning context – from the Province, to Halton Region to supporting tools the town can employ. The meeting provided an overview of key laws, policies, and implementation tools available to shape Midtown Oakville and address topics that include housing mix, parkland dedication and acquisition, sustainability, community facilities, transit, active transportation and roads, and regulating heights and densities.

The meeting on January 30, 2024 (COW #6) will complete the Committee's work and feedback on the proposed concept will be used to shape the land use policy and forthcoming Midtown OPA.

COMMENTS

Proposed Land Use Concept

An extensive amount of feedback has been provided by the public, Council and stakeholders on three initial land use concepts which were presented to Committee of the Whole meeting in November 2023. These concepts provided different approaches to meet the provincial policy direction, as well as accommodate the future residents and jobs allocated to the Midtown area.

The *Jacobs* team used the public's feedback to create a proposed land use concept and policy directions, and this will be presented to the Committee of the Whole on January 30th. This land use concept is a refinement of the three initial concepts, incorporating and balancing those elements identified by stakeholders as best advancing the objective of creating a complete community in Midtown.

The land use concept illustrates how Midtown can be a destination for residents and employees by identifying areas for retail, employment, living and passive enjoyment of parks and open spaces. While Midtown is being designed as an urban centre, oriented around higher-order transit, it is still intended to be a place for a broad demographic – from families to retirees to young professionals.

The concept is similar to how other Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) have been planned and designed across the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area – where there is a concentration of people, jobs, retail, entertainment, and parks. This advances the province’s mandate to accommodate intensification within MTSAs and around transit corridors.

The proposed land use concept will function as a ‘roadmap’ – it identifies the present and future direction for Midtown, and will be used to shape the land use policy, inform servicing plans, guide design decisions, and inspire new placemaking.

Communications and Public / Stakeholder Engagement

Since July 2023, the engagement process led by the *Jacobs* team has been iterative and intentional. The process has encouraged a cross-section of the community from across town and key stakeholders to provide advice on the creation of draft concepts which were then further refined through feedback to arrive at a proposed concept. The process-to-date has been community and stakeholder-driven since it has shaped the concept being presented to the Committee of the Whole.

There has been a diversity of opinions and voices provided to the consultant team and the town – ranging from no-growth, to incremental growth to a desire to see significant changes to the concept to create an urban centre focussed on tall buildings and a robust public realm.

The engagement has been undertaken through interactive public information centres, technical advisory committee meetings, surveys, website and email submissions and the Committee of the Whole meetings. The appendices to this report outline feedback and responses through the Committee process (Appendix A); community workshops feedback (Appendix B); and all submissions to the Town and technical advisory committee meetings from July 2023 to-date (Appendix C).

The public engagement on Midtown will not conclude with the Committee of the Whole. There will be further opportunity for stakeholders to respond to the proposed land use concept at another public information centre scheduled for mid-February 2024. This will help feed-in to the Official Plan Amendment (OPA) which will reflect the proposed land use concept.

Response to the May 2023 Council Resolution

The resolution resulting from the May 2023 Planning & Development public meeting wherein the Midtown OPA was presented, requested that a committee of Council be struck to review the Midtown OPA, provide additional opportunities for public engagement and produce a master plan. The resolution is outlined below, with how the Midtown Oakville Committee of the Whole process has considered and addressed Council’s direction:

May 2023 Council Resolution	Response
<p><i>3. That the proposed Midtown draft OPA be reviewed by Committee of the Whole and staff, in accordance with section 5.6 of the Procedure By-law 2020-011, and that the committee undertakes to report on the Town-initiated Official Plan Amendment - Midtown Oakville Urban Growth Centre (File No. 42.15.59) that should include, but not limited to:</i></p>	
<p><i>a) Comprehensive public consultations and information sharing and review by external subject matter experts on the proposed OPA including urban design, public realm, park space, community building, transportation plan and development density.</i></p>	<p>The Midtown team completed three community workshops- between November 24 – November 29, 2023 to gather public input on three land use concepts, to define Midtown’s urban structure and placemaking elements. The community workshops also involved information sharing and review of parks, open space, heights and densities and community amenities. The public had the opportunity to provide feedback through an online survey that was open until December 15, 2023.</p> <p>Two-way feedback from technical agencies (e.g., the school boards, Hydro One, etc.), Residents’ Associations, landowners, and developers was also gathered throughout the Committee of the Whole process through Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings, developer/landowner meetings, and 1-1 meetings with Residents Associations.</p> <p>Phase 3 engagement will occur between January 31 – February 15, 2024 and will include discussions with the Technical Advisory Committee (meeting #3), developers (meeting #3), the public (PIC #3), and other key stakeholders. Further communication will be</p>

	<p>provided through news releases and web-site updates, identifying dates, timing, and methods to participate.</p> <p>The proposed concept for Midtown Oakville will continue to be refined based on Phase 3 engagement input from the public, Council, and key stakeholders.</p>
<p><i>b) A review of best planning practices for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA) across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and any other relevant urban plan.</i></p>	<p>The Midtown Committee of the Whole meetings have provided discussions and presentations on best practices for comparator transit-oriented communities and Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) within the context of provincial policy changes, community livability, and an evolving economic landscape.</p> <p>At the October 10th Committee of the Whole presentation, discussion explained why Midtown remains a primary strategic growth area and one of 25 Urban Growth Centres (UGCs) across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, a Protected MTSA, and a regional transit node. In providing an overview of the policy directions to be contained in the Midtown OPA, precedent examples of transit-oriented communities from North America were identified as potential precedents.</p> <p>The November 14th Committee of the Whole presentation provided precedent examples from compact, transit-oriented communities from across North America to illustrate elements of the three land use block concepts proposed.</p> <p>The December 12th Committee of the Whole presentation situated the Midtown Oakville OPA within the larger provincial planning context, providing clarity on the tools and processes that are used to guide planning of MTSAs and UGCs.</p>

<p>c) <i>Options to embed in the OPA, mandatory climate change initiatives for the area.</i></p>	<p>Discussions on opportunities to include climate change and sustainability policies within the Midtown Oakville OPA were discussed throughout the Committee of the Whole process.</p> <p>Following the November 14, 2023 Committee of the Whole presentation, written clarification was provided through the Issues Tracker that the Phase 5 of the Midtown Oakville Implementation Program will include development of a Community Energy Plan to address climate change and sustainability issues in Midtown.</p> <p>The December 12, 2023 Committee of the Whole presentation provided an overview of the planning tools and processes that can be used to address topics including climate change. The presentation provided an overview of how sustainability can be supported through the Midtown OPA policies, as well as related tools.</p>
<p>d) <i>A review of a potential comprehensive Community Master Plan for the entire midtown area to include phasing options.</i></p>	<p>Clarification was provided after the July 18, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting that the Midtown Oakville OPA is the next step in the growth and development of Midtown Oakville. Various Midtown implementation plans, including a phasing plan, are being developed.</p> <p>Further clarification was provided following the November 14, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting that development and redevelopment occurs in stages, based on a range of factors, including ones outside of the town’s control such as market conditions. It was further clarified that the OPA sets up a framework of policies to guide and shape future development and redevelopment.</p> <p>The December 12, 2023 Committee of the Whole presentation provided context on a range of planning tools and processes that can be used to address master planning, costing, phasing and implementation of elements scoped</p>

	<p>as part of Phases 5 – 8 of the Midtown Oakville Implementation Program (beyond the Committee of the Whole process).</p>
<p>e) <i>A review and analysis of Midtown and our six growth nodes population forecasts to build out, including the methodology which will assist us in determining the achievement of the mandated Town population growth by 2051 and understanding future capacity and an impact assessment.</i></p>	<p>The Joint Best Planning Estimates (JBPEs), developed in collaboration with the Region of Halton, were presented to Town Council on August 15, 2023 in response to the May 2023 Resolution requesting information and analysis on the methodology used to determine population and employment forecasts to 2051 and beyond for Midtown Oakville and the town’s other Strategic Growth Areas.</p> <p>A verbal update was provided by town staff and the consulting team at the October 10, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting in response to a request to review the PPU calculations, and at the December 12, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting reiterating the August 15, 2023 JBPEs Staff Report articulates where population and employment growth is to be accommodated.</p>
<p>f) <i>Consideration of the Parks, Recreation, Library Master Plan, and Transportation Master plans currently underway and the Parks Plan to be reviewed in Q4 and how these integral plans will support a vibrant livable Midtown.</i></p>	<p>The December 12, 2023 Committee of the Whole presentation provided context on a range of planning tools and processes that can be used to address master planning, costing, phasing and implementation of community services and facilities and parkland, and included reference to consideration of Town-wide plans underway.</p> <p>The December 12, 2023 presentation clarified that there are town-wide studies that are underway which will assist Council and staff in future decision-making and capital planning such as the <i>Parks, Recreation, Library Master Plan</i> and <i>Transportation Master Plan</i>. These documents provide the implementation measures needed to advance Council priorities and strategic direction.</p> <p>While these plans do not directly translate the Midtown concept or Official Plan policy, they</p>

	<p>assist in providing the town-wide picture of their respective elements and how Midtown feeds into the town’s facilities, campus of parks and transportation network. While both of these studies are underway and not yet finalised, they will benefit from Council’s decision on moving Midtown forward.</p>
<p><i>g) An understanding of the required infrastructure timing and the Province, Metrolinx and stakeholder commitment.</i></p>	<p>The December 12, 2023 Committee of the Whole presentation provided clarity that the Midtown Oakville OPA policies are being coordinated with the Midtown Transportation study, and future work of the Midtown Implementation Program will provide more detail on Midtown Oakville’s transportation network and its implementation.</p> <p>In response to questions from Council and the public throughout the Committee of the Whole process with respect to the feedback and involvement of the Province and Metrolinx, Appendix C to this staff report includes feedback from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and landowner/developer meetings, which the Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx participate in. Further engagements are planned for Phase 3 of engagement and will continue after the Committee of the Whole process to inform the Midtown Implementation Program.</p>
<p><i>h) Any other subjects committee members feel are relevant to make the best planning decisions possible for the future of Oakville and the most favourable precedent for future MTSA’s.</i></p>	<p>Other topics and subjects raised through the Committee of the Whole process from July 2023 to January 2024 were addressed on an ongoing basis through the Committee Issues Tracker.</p>

<p>i) <i>That the Committee of the Whole report back to Council no later than Q4 of 2023.</i></p>	<p>A Committee of the Whole meeting was added to the process for January 30, 2024 to provide additional opportunities for Council and public feedback.</p> <p>The January 30, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting constitutes the final report back through the Committee process on the preferred land use block concept and preliminary policy directions.</p> <p>The proposed concept and policy directions will continue to be refined based on Phase 3 engagement input throughout January 31 – February 15, 2024.</p> <p>The draft Midtown OPA reflecting the proposed concept will follow in Q1 2024 with the public posting of the draft Midtown OPA and a public statutory meeting in early Q2 2024.</p>
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As outlined in the above chart, the Committee of the Whole process has been comprehensive, broad and encompassing. The work undertaken by the *Jacobs* team set out to address the scope of review established by Council in the May 2023 Resolution. As noted above, the public engagement process has been detailed and inclusive with a range of opinions and advice offered to the team.

The resulting concept and policy directions have been well-informed by this feedback, while being guided by the provincial growth requirements. The team has looked to other locales as precedence and who have undertaken similar study such as the cities of Vaughan, Markham and Toronto. The elements – including parks systems, mixing of uses and urban format schools – that contribute to liveable and complete Urban Growth Centres have been considered and incorporated into the concept.

The proposed concept and policy directions will be used to not only inform the Official Plan Amendment, but all of the subsequent study and work needed to support Midtown into the future, such as climate change response, and infrastructure and servicing plans (i.e. water, sanitary, stormwater, transportation and transit) and the balance of the implementation program. This program, as presented to Council previously, is focussed on defining how Midtown will be delivered, responsibilities and those elements that will guide future development.

Next Steps

Following the presentation of the proposed concept and policy directions at the Committee of the Whole meeting on January 30, 2024, Phase 3 engagement will commence. This engagement will include discussions with the Technical Advisory Committee (meeting #3), landowners and developers (meeting #3), the public (PIC #3), and other key stakeholders. Further communication will be provided through news releases and web-site updates, identifying dates, timing and methods to participate.

The proposed concept and policy directions for Midtown Oakville will continue to be refined based on Phase 3 engagement input from the public, Council, and key stakeholders.

The draft Midtown OPA reflecting the proposed concept will follow in Q2 2024 with the public posting of the draft Midtown OPA on April 2, 2024 and a public statutory meeting on April 22, 2024, with a recommendation to Council in June 2024.

CONSIDERATIONS

(A) PUBLIC

The town has hosted three statutory public meetings, and several workshops, public information centres, and technical advisory committee meetings on the Midtown OPA. Committee of the Whole meetings – of which there have been five to date, are open to public delegations. The public may submit comments on the draft OPA up until the time Council makes a decision on the matter.

(B) FINANCIAL

None applicable to this report.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

The Midtown OPA and Implementation project involves co-ordination among numerous town departments.

(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report addresses the council strategic priority with respect to accountable government by providing Council and the public with detailed information on the Midtown Oakville OPA and implementation program, and the funding/financial implications associated with various options and emerging policy directions.

(E) CLIMATE CHANGE / ACTION

The Midtown consultant team will provide a future presentation and overview on the Community Energy Plan which is a key component of the Midtown Implementation project.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Issues Tracker

Appendix B – Community Workshops Summary Report

Appendix C – Stakeholder Feedback (Midtown Committee of the Whole Process)

Submitted by:

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