

**Issues Identified at Midtown Committee of the Whole (January 30-31, 2024)**

**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

1. What were the commonalities among all parties (public, stakeholders)?
  - a. How do we proceed to a public statutory meeting and bridge the gap in knowledge?
  - b. What are the ramifications if we cannot bridge the gap and proceed to a public statutory meeting with a draft OPA for Midtown? What is the discourse for landowners?

**Response:**

Commonalities among members of the public, technical agencies, developers and landowners were outlined at a high level at the February 15<sup>th</sup> PIC #3, and included: need for flexible office and retail policies; need for pedestrian-oriented streets and active transportation; concerns with traffic congestion; and importance of phasing.

There is some urgency around proceeding with a draft Midtown OPA. The existing policies are out-of-date and do not conform with provincial policies, as required by law. They must be updated to conform. Furthermore, with the population and employment allocated to the town by the Province and Region, implementation work must be undertaken to advance servicing, phasing and delivery of infrastructure.

There are also a number of development applications in Midtown currently in the pipeline which respond to provincial direction, but do not have the local land use policy to inform the applications. Three of these applications have been appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). A robust policy framework (the Midtown OPA) that conforms with provincial policy requirements represents good planning to guide development applications in Midtown Oakville.

2. With respect to the public statutory meeting on the draft OPA, is there a timeline/clock that starts for Council to make a decision?

**Response:** Refer to the response to Q1 regarding urgency for a Midtown OPA.

3. Request to set up permanent community panel to provide input on development of Midtown.

**Response:** Council to provide direction.

4. Will a summary of all public input / stakeholder be available & posted?
  - a. Request to provide a map of lands owned by the Town.

**Response:** A map of the ownership of lands in Midtown was included in the COW presentations and is posted to the Midtown Oakville website. A summary of public and stakeholder input will be included in the April 22, 2024 public statutory meeting staff report and the June 2024 Recommendation Report.

5. How is “good planning” defined?

**Response:** Good planning is centered around the public interest, facilitating a balance between immediate and long-term planning needs while striving to achieve a community’s unique vision for the future.

6. Define “optimized” versus “maximization” of land.

**Response:** Factors and considerations that inform optimization of lands include, but are not limited to the size and dimensions of a site, the existing and planned context, conformity with provincial and regional policies, upholding the public interest, and giving consideration to “good planning”. It is context specific.

7. What is the mandated provincial minimum population/jobs for Midtown Oakville?  
Is there a provincially mandated minimum for 2051 for Midtown Oakville?

**Response:** Refer to the response to Q8 below.

## **HEIGHTS / DENSITIES**

8. What factors have led to the planning of the proposed densities in the concept?

**Response:**

The Growth Plan allocates growth across the Greater Golden Horseshoe region to efficiently utilize lands. The Growth Plan allocated 1.1M people and 500,000 jobs to Halton Region to be planned for and accommodated by 2051.

The Region of Halton, as an upper-tier municipality, is responsible for further allocating the provincially mandated growth targets of 1.1M people and 500,000 jobs by 2051 across the region, in alignment with the Region’s growth structure.

The population and employment estimates to 2051 were developed by the Region in collaboration with the lower tier municipalities based on provincially mandated minimum growth targets for Halton through the Growth Plan. The

estimates, released by the Region and Oakville in 2023, allocated 443K people and 212K jobs to Oakville, and 32K people and 17K jobs to Midtown.

The population and growth estimates were an update to the 2022 estimates of 350K people and 181K jobs to the Town of Oakville by 2051. The numbers were updated based on three key inputs:

1. The Growth Plan growth targets to 2051;
  2. The Provincial Housing Strategy targets of 33K homes by 2031; and
  3. Development applications in the pipeline (reflecting market demands).
9. Are tall towers a requirement needed now as a result of decades of sprawl / low density development in Oakville? Are tall towers a necessity at this point? There are opportunities to design attractive tall towers with good urban design.

**Response:**

Midtown Oakville, as an Urban Growth Centre (UGC), Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA), and the primary Strategic Growth Area within the town, is required to be planned for a minimum of 32K people and 17K jobs by 2051.

Population and employment density can be accommodated in a range of built forms, which town staff and the consultant team are exploring. The intent is to plan the area comprehensively from a policy perspective, establish the critical community elements first, and then look at the developable area from an urban design perspective. The plans for Midtown are about liveability and improving access to a range of housing options and choice.

The developable area in Midtown is approximately 40 hectares after accounting for public roads, parks, rail corridor, and utilities. To provide a range of housing types, the plans for Midtown Oakville will need to include a range of tall and mid-rise built forms throughout Midtown. The proposed concept aims to provide a range of built form typologies (not just tall towers) by incorporating about 57% of the developable land base as tall buildings (heights between 8 – 48 storeys), with about 43% of the developable land base as mid-rise and low-rise buildings and podiums (between 4 – 7 storeys). Taller buildings result from trying to accommodate the same density while creating more slender tower floorplates to achieve design objectives. A taller built form can be positioned on a podium, with appropriate setbacks and design, to ensure a human-scale at street level.

Other comparator UGC/PMTSAs have heights comparable to those in the Midtown proposed concept, with mid-rise podium components integrated into tall buildings to facilitate that human-scale at the ground level. Lesser heights and densities would not represent good planning for this UGC/PMTSA.

10. Review distribution of density / across Midtown in context of provincial density requirements.

**Response:** Refer to the response to Q8 above.

11. When will we receive new options with a maximum 4 FSI by the railway tracks to the North and 2 FSI on Cornwall East, and the output of density that would result.

**Response:**

Various public comments have recommended concepts with lower FSI maximums and a mid-rise only concept across Midtown. As articulated in the response to Q8 above, the Midtown OPA must still meet provincially mandated population and employment forecasts, and must conform to provincial policy.

As outlined in the response to Q9, the proposed concept aims to provide a range of built forms (not just tall towers) by incorporating about 57% of the developable land base as tall buildings (between 8 – 48 storeys), with 43% of the developable land base as mid-rise and low-rise buildings and podiums (4 – 7 storeys).

Population and employment density can be accommodated in a range of built forms, which town staff and the consultant team continue to explore to achieve the vision for Midtown, implement sound urban design principles while meeting provincial policy requirements and establishing community elements.

12. With the constraints of 2031 minimum of 20,600 people and jobs, and the 2051 forecasts, can you provide options that distribute population primarily in the growth nodes more consistently with available land mass and more human-scale built form?

**Response:**

A growth distribution exercise was undertaken by the Region of Halton and the lower-tier municipalities and commenced several years ago with the Region's Integrated Growth Management Strategy, part of the Region's Official Plan Review (ROPR). The municipalities collaborated with the Region throughout the ROPR. The people and jobs allocated to the Town of Oakville to 2051 was a result of the Minister's approval of the ROPR, which reflects the provincially mandated growth targets. The 443 people and 212K jobs were allocated to the Town of Oakville in accordance with the Council-approved Urban Structure, which directs the majority of forecasted population and employment growth to Strategic Growth Areas – the town's network of nodes and corridors supported

by higher order transit. Approximately 72% of Oakville's future population growth and approximately 53% of future employment growth to 2051 is planned to be accommodated within the town's Strategic Growth Areas, with the majority of growth directed to Midtown Oakville as a provincially designated Urban Growth Centre. Appendix B to the staff report ("Midtown Program" dated 21 February, 2024 – P&D meeting of 27 February, 2024) provides further details on the breakdown of population and employment across the Town's Strategic Growth Areas.

13. Are the storeys in the preferred concept true maximums or are there exemptions that enable more heights or developable area?

**Response:** The proposed concept illustrates a range of building heights and illustrates what the maximum height should be to implement the concept and accommodate the planned population and employment.

#### DEVELOPABLE LAND

14. Further to the questions raised by delegations on January 30 regarding clarity around the amount of developable area in Midtown (43 ha v. 67 ha), provide the calculations on actual developable land in Midtown.

**Response:** The minimum required growth to be accommodated within Midtown Oakville by 2051 (32K people and 17K jobs by 2051) must be accommodated within approximately 40 hectares of land – the net developable area.

The developable area has removed lands required for:

- public roads (26 ha);
- utilities / rail (21 ha);
- parks (12.8 ha);
- natural heritage (1.4 ha); and
- public rights-of-way (0.7 ha)

15. How many hectares are available for development after accounting for roads, parks, sidewalks, schools, etc.?

**Response:** Refer to the response to Q14 above.

#### ALTERNATE APPROACHES

16. Request to see other models / approaches beyond tall towers.

17. Request to meet with the OMG group (town and staff) – how will public feedback on this alternate option be gathered / consolidated?
18. How would the “Copenhagen approach” fit for Midtown Oakville.

**Responses (Q16-18):** Refer to responses to Q9 and Q11 above. Additionally, at the request of the public and Town Council, the O.M.G. proposal that was presented to the COW on January 30-31, 2024 was reviewed by the consultant team and town staff; furthermore, staff and the consultants met with the O.M.G. representatives on February 20, 2024 to further discuss their proposal.

The town is aligned on a number of areas to create a liveable urban centre in Midtown Oakville. These include focussing on walkability, pedestrian orientation, and vibrancy at-grade. The latter is created by having a mix of uses at street level and framing the street with a human-scaled built form. Where the town and the O.M.G. proposal are not aligned generally involve the approach to development yield assumptions and the resulting ability to achieve population and job projections, the street and block network and the resulting built form.

There are a range of policy directions for what UGCs and PMTSAs are to achieve, including minimum population and jobs. The planning framework for Midtown must also reflect requirements of the Town, Region, MTO, and technical agencies such as Hydro, the school boards and others - which have been gathered through ongoing technical advisory committee meetings. These requirements influence important base assumptions related to things like rights of way and land uses.

There is more information that staff are seeking related to the O.M.G. proposal; town staff anticipate receiving O.M.G.’s base assumptions and most current proposal shortly. It is not clear, however, based on the feedback from the February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting that the O.M.G. proposal would conform to provincial policy or adequately demonstrate achievement of policy objectives and requirements.

Based on the February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, it is apparent that there is a significant difference between the base assumptions used to develop the O.M.G. proposal and the consultant team’s proposed concept. There are significant differences in, among other things, developable area, road configuration and rights of way, persons per unit and unit size and how employment is integrated and accounted for in the proposal, and how and where schools are accommodated.

Of significant concern is the role and function of the road network. The O.M.G. proposal eliminates the north/south roads in favour of private laneways, and eliminates the “Avenue” concept in order to narrow the east/west roads. This approach will have significant impacts to the transportation functioning. It is not clear how the OMG proposal would accommodate transit and active transportation, on street parking in support of the businesses along the roadways, or how the roads would contribute to the sense of place that current proposal is promoting. The underlying objective of the OMG concept, which is to create a liveable, walkable, vibrant community, is valuable input to town staff and the consultant team, and to the policy development process. Additional attention and emphasis can be considered in the policy approaches to enhance these concepts and promote design approaches that are intended to realize these common objectives.

#### PARKS / OPEN SPACE & CLIMATE / SUSTAINABILITY

19. How can we ensure improved (naturalized) connectivity of the 3 hectare park?
20. Do we have enough surface parking for people visiting the parks in Midtown?
21. Importance of also accounting for dog parks with the increased populations.
22. Consideration of land swaps to spread some of the density across Town to facilitate more parks in Midtown and mitigate some traffic congestion in Midtown in accessing parks.
23. Financial Analyses are outstanding with respect to the parks/open spaces / land acquisition.

**Responses (Q19-23):** The proposed approach would support the establishment of a comprehensive parks and open space system through a parkland dedication and acquisition strategy, as part of the Midtown Implementation Program. This strategy will include financial analyses and will build on the 2031 Parks Plan.

Considerations will include protection of natural heritage areas and improving naturalized connectivity of the 3 hectare park. Flexible parking options that can evolve as the area becomes better served by transit and active transportation facilities in the fullness of time will be addressed through related Midtown OPA policies around transportation, parking, phasing, and implementation.

24. Request for information on climate change implications of the consultant’s plan.
25. 6-10 storeys most environmentally friendly built form – to consider for Midtown.

**Responses (Q24-25):** The Midtown OPA will include policies for climate change and sustainability as part of the Midtown Implementation Program.

The proposed concept aims to provide a range of built form typologies (not just tall towers) by incorporating about 57% of the developable land base as tall buildings (heights between 8 – 48 storeys), with about 43% of the developable land base as mid-rise and low-rise buildings and podiums (4 – 7 storeys).

### **COMMUNITY AMENITIES / COMPLETE COMMUNITIES**

26. Need to plan for a complete community, and a high quality of life.
1. Did not see playgrounds represented on the preferred concept.
  2. Highlighted school site needs over the planning time horizon.
  3. Concern with health care facilities (securing medical facilities in area)
  4. Lack of integration of Midtown with the rest of Town outlined in concept.
  5. Anticipate bottleneck of traffic with parents travelling out of Midtown to access recreation / parks / services outside of the area during rush hour (limited transit)
27. Can you provide the methodology for school allocations for the Town and Midtown?
28. What and how have the implications of the loss of the medical building been considered? How can we ensure this important service continues throughout construction?

### **Responses (Q26-28):**

The School Boards have been part of the Midtown Technical Advisory Committee. They advised on the requirement for three (3) school sites adjacent to open space areas to accommodate requirements for open play space for students and residents during non-school hours through shared use agreements, which has been incorporated into the proposed approach. This is based on the Boards' methodology for long-term facilities planning. Some of the parks and open spaces depicted on the proposed approach may include play equipment.

Providing details on the specific locations of playgrounds and medical facilities is beyond the scope of an OPA. The mixed use land base proposed for Midtown Oakville as part of the proposed concept will enable a range of uses. These are implementation details too granular for OPAs.



## RETAIL/CULTURAL AMENITIES

29. How do we create strategies and policies to achieve / implement the retail and cultural amenities and spaces envisioned for Midtown?
1. Is there a Plan B for when there is a shift in the retail market?
  2. How will OPA reflect/respond to challenges in the office market & enable nimbleness?
  3. Need to talk to retailers to develop retail / cultural policies. Perhaps have retail experts come to provide analysis / advice direct to Council and the public.
  4. Potential of identifying / creating 1-2 retail focused / pedestrian oriented streets
  5. What is the risk that landowners will seek conversions from employment to residential?
30. Re-imagine the mall / re-imagine the plaza for infill development (2-4 storeys).
1. Re-imagine Oakville Place close to Midtown Oakville (no auto need / ability to access community amenities, existing retail, service commercial).

**Responses (Q29-30):** The draft Midtown OPA will include policies on retail desired in mixed use developments. Policies may address “reimagining the mall”, reimagining retail, and design characteristics of retail spaces.

## URBAN DESIGN/BUILT FORM

31. Will urban design guidelines be embedded in the OPA? Will they be standards or guidelines?
32. Potential for “Grand Boulevard” concept for human-scaled densification.
33. Preferred concept did not reflect landmarks that make Oakville and Midtown distinctive. Tall towers are not distinctive gateway elements for Oakville or Midtown Oakville. The unique characteristics: lake, harbour, tree canopy, history of transportation town (port to Ford), Glen Abbey, Sixteen Mile Creek.

**Responses (Q31-33):** Urban design policies will be included in the OPA to guide development of a complete community with human-scaled design and landmarks / gateway elements that make Oakville distinct, and distinguish Midtown Oakville.

## COMMUNITY PLANNING PERMITS SYSTEM (CPPS)

34. Explore options for utilising CPPS including potentially incorporating into OPA.

35. Requested training/workshop on CPPS.

36. Request Council direct staff to use consultants to implement CPPS if staff require the services to do so. Will we use the CPPS to incorporate affordable housing policies into the Midtown Oakville OPA (or leave up to developer)? CPPS to ensure schools and community benefits provided?

**Responses (Q34-36):** Staff will be bringing forward information to Council on a Community Planning Permit System, and considerations for Midtown in Q2 2024. Retaining consultant support is subject to the town's procurement by-law.

#### HOUSING/AFFORDABILITY

37. What are the limits in providing affordable housing through the OPA or ZBA?

**Response:** Beyond the CPPS, policies to enable a range of housing options will be included in the draft OPA, with additional policies to be included to enable tools that may include Inclusionary Zoning, which can be utilized in a PMTSA.

38. Clarification on what PPU is most appropriate to use given changing demographics to ensure the required services and infrastructure are in place.

**Response:** The PPU assumptions for Midtown and the other Strategic Growth Areas are based on the town's 2022 Development Charges Report, which uses 1.7 PPU for apartments. This includes 1-bedroom or less (1.394 PPU) and 2-bedrooms or more (1.849), resulting in a blended average of 1.7 PPU. The PPU is generated from an adjusted Statistics Canada Custom 2016 Census database. The forecast unit mix is based upon historical trends and housing units throughout the development process.

#### TRANSPORTATION / ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

39. Want to see more true / full pedestrian-only spaces in Midtown in preferred concepts.

40. When will the Active Transportation Master Plan connections be prioritized?

41. Concerns with 6 lane road (need more pedestrian-oriented streets, narrower roadways).

42. Draft Transportation Master Plan for Midtown – noted in past C of W meetings – outstanding item/critical to planning the Midtown Oakville Draft OPA.

- a. Do we have a sense of the transportation capacity and impacts anticipated?
- 43. Signalized intersections and traffic around Midtown – recommended roundabouts (different approaches in other jurisdictions) as a potential solution for Midtown traffic congestion.
- 44. The proposed transportation network does not connect Midtown to rest of Town – integration of Midtown (both hard and soft infrastructure and services) is critical.
- 45. If nothing changes with Metrolinx/they do not extend the platform, how it will affect the Plan for Midtown Oakville's transportation network proposed? How will no Metrolinx plans to relocate the bus terminal / no funding associated address GO train congestion?
- 46. Transitional parking policies: As Metrolinx has requested higher densities on their lands north of the railway tracks, and urban development rather than parkland on their property south of the railway tracks, when combined with development applications requesting a reduced parking standard of 0.5 of a space per unit, a transitional parking policy is required to satisfy the current need for parking while preparing for a reduction in private automobile use over time.

**Responses (Q39-46):**

Planning for transportation network improvements is based on the overarching plan for Midtown Oakville. Creating an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) for Midtown premised on growth numbers beyond 2051 enables the municipality to use the OPA, and the estimates upon which it is based, to inform Order-of-Magnitude cost estimates and municipal budget processes for subsequent plans including, the Midtown Transportation Plan.

Previous work, such as the Midtown Transportation and Stormwater Environmental Assessment, establishes the road network and connections necessary for the long-term functionality of Midtown. Additional transportation studies are intended to understand and make minor adjustments to the transportation network, and specify the phasing and sequencing required for implementation of the Midtown Transportation Plan.

The Midtown OPA will include enabling policies around parking (flexible / transitional), implementation, phasing, and monitoring to address the range of transportation issues identified.

## FINANCIAL / COST IMPLICATIONS / PHASING

47. Can the town / consultants expand on “other funding sources” available to fund Midtown? Concern with changes to Development Charges (DCs) through Bill 23.
48. Suggestion for policies around cost-sharing among Midtown landowners, and clarity on intent/purpose of a landowners’ cost-sharing group.
49. What tools and phasing strategies are available so services and amenities are in place to ensure a complete community during the phases of development over the decades?
50. Servicing for Midtown (water/wastewater) and the cost associated with the plans? Timing / length of time for the area servicing.
51. No funding/financial implications for Midtown Oakville contained in staff report. Please clarify for the public what is paid for by the taxpayers, what is paid for by developers, and what is paid for by Metrolinx and the province? Request Council direct town staff to provide financial implications for Midtown Oakville.

### **Responses (Q47-51):**

The majority of the infrastructure costs required for Midtown will be funded through Development Charges (DCs). A total of \$393M (2024) in transportation infrastructure costs are forecast based on previously completed Midtown studies and projects identified in the 2022 DCs Background Study completed by Watson (one of Midtown’s consultants), for which \$386M (or 98%) will be funded by DCs and through anticipated cost-sharing agreements with the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), Metrolinx, and Halton Region.

The town’s 2024-2033 Capital Forecast included \$304 million in Midtown-related transportation infrastructure. Of this total, \$297 million, or 98%, will be funded by DCs and anticipated cost-sharing arrangements with MTO and Metrolinx. Beyond the ten year forecast, \$89 million in costs are forecast, all of which are expected to be funded by DCs and cost-sharing arrangements with MTO and Halton region. Water and Wastewater projects required to support Midtown are the responsibility of the Region and they are predominantly funded through DCs

Municipalities plan for infrastructure and servicing like stormwater, water and sanitary servicing through long-range growth planning estimates beyond mandated minimum requirements. Creating an OPA for Midtown premised on growth numbers beyond 2051 enables the municipality to use the OPA and the estimates upon which it is based to inform Order-of-Magnitude cost estimates and municipal budget processes for subsequent plans including the Midtown

Stormwater Plan, Area Servicing Plan, Functional Servicing Report and Utilities Plan that will be developed as part of the Midtown Implementation Program.

The Midtown OPA will include enabling policies around implementation, phasing, and monitoring / evaluation of area servicing and hard infrastructure. More generally, on-going monitoring to assess need for adjustments based on market demands and pressures will be included as part of the draft OPA policies.