



REPORT

Planning and Development Council

Meeting Date: September 22, 2025

FROM: Planning and Development Department

DATE: September 9, 2025

SUBJECT: **Public Meeting Report – Town-initiated Official Plan Amendment – Provincial Consistency Exercise (File No. 42.15.67)**

LOCATION: Town-wide

WARD: Town-wide

Page 1

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the staff report titled “Public Meeting Report – Town-initiated Official Plan Amendment – Provincial Consistency Exercise (File No. 42.15.67)”, be received.
2. That comments from the public with respect to the draft town-initiated Official Plan Amendment (File No. 42.15.67) be received.
3. That staff consider such comments as may be provided by Council.

KEY FACTS

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

- The Town’s Official Plan Review was launched at a Special Public Meeting of Planning and Development Council on May 11, 2015. A provincial consistency exercise is being undertaken as a component of the town’s Official Plan Review.
- Under the umbrella of the Official Plan Review, staff have completed 15 major studies with 18 associated Official Plan Amendments adopted by Council, with an additional four studies currently underway.
- Since the initiation of the Official Plan Review, the provincial policy regime has evolved, with a significant number of changes to a range of planning

related legislation, including major changes to Ontario’s land use planning framework.

- The provincial consistency exercise is scoped to aspects of the Livable Oakville Official Plan that can be modified for consistency without requiring additional study. It is expected that planned future studies/reviews within the larger Policy Planning work program will also address provincial consistency and conformity.
- A number of *Planning Act* requirements have changed and some of the Livable Oakville Plan policies are out of date.
- The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) was repealed in 2024 and several Livable Oakville Plan policies and concepts reference the Growth Plan.
- A new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 has replaced the former Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and Growth Plan. Updates to Livable Oakville Plan policies and definitions are required to align with this document.
- Major changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* narrowed the Conservation Authorities’ scope to primarily natural hazards. Natural heritage and other aspects were previously under their review, and the current policies reflect that relationship, which now require updating.
- The Province has expressed its intent to remove the Parkway Belt West Plan, which is currently a designation in the Livable Oakville Plan.
- As of July 1, 2024, Halton Region is an upper tier municipality without planning authority.
- The purpose of the public meeting at Planning and Development Council is for Council to hear public delegations on the draft OPA, ask questions of clarification and identify additional planning matters to be considered.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to introduce the draft Official Plan Amendment to implement the findings of a scoped provincial consistency exercise focused on addressing provincial legislation changes and the new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS, 2024). This exercise is a component of the Official Plan Review. The report is to be received and the draft Official Plan Amendment is attached as Appendix A.

The Town’s Official Plan Review was initiated in 2015. As part of the Official Plan Review work program, Planning Staff have completed the following studies resulting in associated Official Plan Amendments (OPAs):

- Urban Structure Review (OPA 15)
- Cultural Heritage Policy Review (OPA 16)
- Bronte Village Growth Area Review (OPA 18)
- Kerr Village Growth Area Review (OPA 19)
- Downtown Oakville Growth Area Review (OPA 20)
- Employment and Commercial Review (OPA 26)
- Speers Road Corridor Study (OPA 27)
- Active Transportation Update (OPA 28)
- Palermo Village Growth Area Review (OPA 34 and 37)
- Hospital District Study (OPA 35)
- Bronte GO MTSA Study (OPA 41)
- North Oakville Secondary Plans Review – Part 1 (OPA 321 and 322)
- North Oakville West Secondary Plan Review (OPA 34 and 37)
- Neyagawa Urban Core Growth Area Review (OPA 45)
- Midtown Oakville Review (OPA 70)

The Uptown Core Growth Area Review, Employment Areas Review and North Oakville East Commercial Study Implementation are currently on-going, with anticipated completion by the end of 2025.

In addition to the Official Plan Review work program, Planning staff have responded to a changing provincial policy regime, including the 2017 Growth Plan, 2017 Greenbelt Plan, 2020 Growth Plan, Bill 108, Bill 197 and 2020 Provincial Policy Statement.

On October 25, 2022 the Proposed Revocation of the Parkway Belt West Plan notice was published on the Environmental Registry of Ontario via ERO number 019-6167. Originally open for a 66-day public review and comment period, the notice was updated on September 27, 2024 to indicate that there has been no change to the status of the proposal and it is still being considered. The proposal is to revoke the Parkway Belt West Plan, 1978, which would allow land that was once reserved for infrastructure corridors and open space to be used for other purposes.

On November 28, 2022, Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act*, received Royal Assent. It made extensive changes to several acts and regulations. The *Planning Act* was amended to, among other changes, remove most planning functions from certain upper-tier municipalities, including Halton Region, with an implementation

date to follow. It also changed the alternative parkland dedication requirements. Significant changes were made to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, impacting how conservation authorities operate and their role in development and natural resource management. The effective date for those changes was April 1, 2024.

On June 6, 2024, Bill 185, the *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act*, received Royal Assent. This omnibus bill made changes to a wide range of legislation, including changes to Ontario's land use planning framework. Among other matters, it removed the mandatory pre-consultation requirement for development applications and identified July 1, 2024 as the effective date of upper-tier planning changes for Halton Region.

On April 6, 2023, the province released a proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2023 to replace the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan). A subsequent draft was released for public comment on June 16, 2023, followed by another draft released on April 10, 2024. The final version of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS 2024) was released on August 20, 2024 and came into effect on October 20, 2024.

Given the significant number of legislative changes and the modifications to Ontario's land use planning framework, there are several aspects of the Livable Oakville Plan that are now out of date. Staff has undertaken a scoped provincial consistency review to address as many of these inconsistencies as possible, before the end of 2025.

There are elements of the Livable Oakville Plan that will require further amendment to align with provincial policy direction and legislation. However, this work is anticipated in 2026 and beyond, under the Policy Planning work program.

COMMENTS

The proposed draft Official Plan Amendment is focused on addressing the following:

1. *Planning Act* changes
2. Repeal of the Growth Plan
3. New Provincial Planning Statement, 2024
4. *Conservation Authorities Act* changes
5. Parkway Belt West Plan
6. Halton Region

1. *Planning Act* changes

As mentioned, a number of recent legislative changes have occurred, and aspects of the Livable Oakville Plan are now considered out of date, including parkland dedication, exemptions for post-secondary institutions, pre-consultation and notice.

Parkland Dedication

Bill 23 has most recently changed the parkland dedication requirements in Ontario. The alternative parkland dedication rate was reduced from 1 hectare for every 300 residential units to 1 hectare for every 600 units. The cash in lieu equivalent was also reduced from 1 hectare for every 500 units to 1 hectare for every 1000 units. The maximum alternative parkland dedication rate was capped at 15% of the developable land (or equivalent value) for sites greater than 5 hectares and no more than 10% for sites 5 hectares or less. The Town passed Parkland Dedication By-law 2024-034 to reflect these changes; however, the current Livable Oakville Plan policies do not reflect the new requirements.

The draft Official Plan Amendment proposes to revise the parkland dedication policies by removing the outdated references adding a new policy that refers directly to the alternative rate established by the Town's Parkland Dedication By-law (By-law 2024-034, partially under dispute). This allows for any future legislative changes to be reflected via updates to the Parkland Dedication By-law and avoids the need to update the official plan policy.

Exemptions for Post-Secondary Institutions

Bill 185 made changes to exempt post-secondary institutions, being publicly-assisted universities and colleges or universities federated or affiliated with a publicly-assisted university, from the requirements of the *Planning Act*. This means an exemption from the requirement to obtain Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, Site Plan approvals, Draft Plan of Subdivision approvals etc.

Currently, the Livable Oakville Plan includes exception policies for the Sheridan College lands on Trafalgar Road. The draft Official Plan Amendment proposes to remove those policies in their entirety, as they have no legislative basis.

Pre-consultation

Bill 185 removed the authority for municipalities to require a pre-consultation prior to the submission of a planning application. While it is no longer mandatory, it remains voluntary and a component of the Town's planning application process.

The draft Official Plan Amendment proposes removal of the requirement terminology within the existing pre-consultation policies, while maintaining that it is encouraged.

Notice

Regulatory changes under Bill 185 were made to modernize public notice requirements under the *Planning Act*. The changes provide municipalities with the ability to provide notice for Official Plans, Zoning By-laws, Holding By-laws, Interim Control By-laws, Plans of Subdivisions, Consents, Minor Variances, Community Benefit Charges and Parkland on a municipal website if there is no local print newspaper available.

The Oakville Beaver ceased print publication on September 15, 2023. The current Livable Oakville policies include reference to the newspaper in the notice requirements. The draft official plan proposed to replace these newspaper references with the Town of Oakville website.

1. Repeal of the Growth Plan

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) was repealed and effectively replaced by the new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. This was a fundamental change in the land use planning framework in Ontario and the Livable Oakville Plan is based on concepts from the Growth Plan. At this time, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and Growth Plan, 2020 will continue to apply where the Greenbelt Plan refers to them.

In addition to the removal of Growth Plan references, a number of concepts and definitions from the Growth Plan are proposed to be removed in the draft Official Plan Amendment, as they are no longer relevant from a provincial planning perspective.

These include:

- Intensification targets
- Urban Growth Centre
- Provincial Priority Transit Corridor
- Built Boundary
- Greenfield areas
- Municipal comprehensive review
- Greater Golden Horseshoe

Both the policy text and schedules are proposed to be updated to reflect the changes.

2. New Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The new Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), 2024 is intended to replace both the Growth Plan and Provincial Planning Statement. Through this streamlining process, some concepts have been modified, and others have not been carried forward.

Growth Forecasts

The PPS, 2024 sets a planning horizon of at least 20 years, but not more than 30 years. It introduces 2051 population and employment forecasts and municipalities are to base their population and employment growth forecasts on the Ministry of Finance 25-year projections, but they may modify these as appropriate.

The draft Official Plan Amendment proposes to update the Livable Oakville Plan's planning horizon from 2031 to 2051 and provide updated town-wide population and employment forecasts for 2031, 2041 and 2051. These numbers are based on the growth management projections by Watson & Associates, as part of the Town's on-going growth management monitoring.

Density Targets

Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) are the key areas for future growth and intensification in the PPS, 2024 and are reflected in the Council-approved Urban Structure. In the Oakville context, the Town's Growth Areas are considered SGAs. Midtown Oakville and Bronte GO continue to be considered Major Transit Station Areas in the PPS 2024, which are a type of SGA.

To address SGA policies in the PPS 2024, and utilize the existing applicable Halton Region SGA density targets via Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 48, the draft Official Plan Amendment proposes to introduce a new table that identifies the minimum density targets for those SGAs on higher order transit corridors. These include Midtown Oakville, Bronte GO, Uptown Core, Palermo Village and Hospital District.

Indigenous Communities

The PPS 2024 emphasizes the importance of engaging with indigenous communities and acknowledges the unique role Indigenous communities have in in land use planning. Currently, the Livable Oakville Plan addresses Indigenous communities through its Cultural Heritage policies.

In advance of a Town Indigenous Engagement Plan, the draft Official Plan Amendment proposes to include the Town's land acknowledgement at the beginning of the Livable Oakville Plan document, prior to the explanatory notes section.

A land acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation that involves recognizing the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples who lived on, and often still live on, the lands long before the arrival of settlers. Including a land acknowledgement in an official plan is important to raise awareness of Indigenous presence, acknowledge colonialization, recognize Indigenous people’s traditional role as stewards of the land, and invite deeper reflection on the history and legacy of the area.

Definitions

A number of definitions have been revised for additional clarity in the PPS, 2024, including:

- Built heritage resource
- Complete communities
- Conserved (or conserve)
- Cultural Heritage Landscape
- Development
- Flooding Hazards
- Heritage Attributes
- Higher Order Transit
- Infrastructure
- Intensification
- Major Transit Station Area
- Public Service Facilities
- Settlement Areas
- Strategic Growth Area

The draft official plan proposes to update the Livable Oakville Plan definitions to reflect the revisions where applicable.

3. *Conservation Authorities Act* changes

Bill 23 made significant changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* which effectively delegate conservation authority (CA) regulatory responsibility to individual municipalities. The changes have narrowed the scope of CAs in reviewing planning applications to primarily natural hazards, including flooding and erosion, and they no longer review matters related to natural heritage. As a result, municipalities are now required to oversee the areas previously under the jurisdiction of the CAs.

The current Livable Oakville policies are required to be updated as a result. The draft Official Plan Amendment makes several changes to reflect the new roles, adding references to the Town and removing or modifying references to the Conservation Authority, where applicable.

4. Parkway Belt West Plan

The Province has, most recently through its 2022 ERO notice, indicated its intention to revoke the Parkway Belt West Plan. It is Ontario's first provincial land use plan, created in 1978 to establish an infrastructure corridor, urban separator and linked open space system stretching from Markham to Hamilton. As the Greater Toronto Area has become increasingly urbanized and the provincial land use planning framework more sophisticated, the Parkway Belt West Plan is considered by many as unnecessary.

The draft Official Plan Amendment proposes to introduce a new policy in the Parkway Belt West section of the Livable Oakville Plan that sets out clear direction in the case of revocation of the Parkway Belt West Plan. Currently, the Livable Oakville Plan has large areas of land designated Parkway Belt West. Should the Parkway Belt West Plan become obsolete, there would be no policies to guide the future development of the lands. The new proposed policy establishes clear direction on how those lands are to be addressed through a requirement for Official Plan Amendment and zoning by-law amendment, with associated criteria.

5. Halton Region

Bill 23 and Bill 185 removed planning responsibilities from specified upper-tier municipalities, including Halton Region. The Region was previously the Town's approval authority under the *Planning Act*, and an intricate part of the planning approval process. Their shift in role has been a significant change to the Town's approval process, and responsibilities that previously were under the Region are now a Town responsibility. As a result, Livable Oakville Plan policies must be updated to reflect this new relationship and the proposed draft official plan includes these modifications, where applicable.

Areas Not Addressed

The scoped provincial consistency review has intentionally excluded matters that are currently being addressed through ongoing study or are awaiting decision by the Province or Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). These include:

- Midtown Oakville policies, which are currently proposed to be updated through OPA 70 and awaiting Minister's approval.

- Uptown Core Growth Area policies, which are currently being assessed through the Uptown Core Growth Area Review. This study is anticipated to conclude at the end of 2025 with an associated Official Plan Amendment.
- "Areas of Employment" are currently being updated as part of the Employment Areas Review. This study is expected to conclude at the end of 2025 with an associated official plan amendment. In addition, OPA 68, considered an interim amendment to address employment area policy changes, is currently under appeal to the OLT.
- Former section 37 bonusing: Bill 108 replaced the density bonusing provisions of section 37 in the *Planning Act* with a community benefits charge regime. It is anticipated that a future official plan amendment to address the outdated references to bonusing within the town's official plans will be brought to Council at a later date.

CONCLUSIONS / NEXT STEPS

The sweeping changes to Ontario's legislation and planning framework over the past several years has created the need for an incremental approach to provincial consistency.

As an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibility, the Halton Region Official Plan became one of the Town's three Official Plans on July 1, 2024. Within the Town of Oakville, the Livable Oakville Plan, North Oakville Secondary Plans (1984 Official Plan as parent plan) and Halton Region Official Plan are all applicable. A future process will be required to merge the three plans into a single, unified official plan document, accounting for variations in current provincial consistency and alignment, and recognizing the new roles within municipal review.

This is expected to be a complex undertaking and will form part of the Policy Planning work program for 2026.

The draft Official Plan Amendment is attached as Appendix A to this report. It is based on a scoped provincial consistency exercise focused on policy modifications that can be undertaken immediately, without additional study. The amendment proposes updated policies throughout the Livable Oakville Plan, as well as town-wide mapping changes.

This report and meeting are intended to satisfy the statutory public meeting requirements of the *Planning Act*, and provide Council the opportunity to hear public delegations of the draft Official Plan Amendment, ask questions of clarification and identify additional planning matters to be considered. Comments from the public, town departments and external agencies may result in changes to the draft Official

Plan Amendment before it is recommended for adoption by Council at a future Planning and Development Council meeting.

CONSIDERATIONS

(A) PUBLIC

The draft Official Plan Amendment was made available for review on the Town of Oakville website on September 2, 2025. It was also emailed to the Official Plan Review email distribution list, totalling approximately 1,400 email addresses.

(B) FINANCIAL

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

The draft Official Plan Amendment was circulated to internal departments and external agencies for review.

(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report addresses Council's strategic priorities by confirming the town's urban structure to manage forecasted growth while protecting natural areas, preserving cultural heritage, and maintaining the character of existing neighbourhoods by way of updated policies and mapping which align with provincial direction.

(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION

The draft Official Plan Amendment emphasizes the importance of planning for the impacts of a changing climate through new policy references and introduction of a new definition.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Draft Official Plan Amendment – Provincial Consistency Exercise

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